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Exploring the Use of Cognitive & Meta-cognitive Strategies in Written Test Performance: A Case Study of Master One Students, Department of English, University of 8 Mai 1945-Guelma

A Dissertation Submitted to the Department of Letters and English Language in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master in Language and Culture

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1. Statement of the Problem

Most of the students at the department of English language have a low proficiency in writing. This may result from many factors mainly the lack of having practice in writing, or lack of interest in the writing field, or a problem in their cognition or meta-cognition that would lead them to receive low scores in their examination marks. The application of the cognitive and meta-cognitive processes in writing is an effective and essential step for the learners' writing skills. The unawareness and ignorance of these strategies from the students or teachers would lead to a poor writing performance. Furthermore, students would not receive high scores when doing quizzes; as well as, when taking their exams especially when they are required to write essays.

2. Aims of the Study

Engaging the students to practice their writing through using their cognitive and meta-cognitive processes while writing either in exams, quizzes, or during classroom evaluation through tests, and receiving the appropriate feedback in a form of scores from their teachers is very effective in learning English as a foreign language. This would help in solving different writing problems that EFL students may encounter, in order to have good writing. This research is used to gather information about the different cognitive and meta-cognitive processes students may use in written test compositions. In addition, it tries to make students and teachers aware about the cognitive and meta-cognitive processes that should be followed when it comes to writing in general, and writing in tests and exams in particular. Hence, the aims of this research can be summarized in the following points:

- To find out the main cognitive and meta-cognitive processes that are associated with writing during tests and exams.
- To make the learners and teachers aware about the cognitive and meta-cognitive strategies involved in the writing test process.

3. Research Questions

This research addresses the following questions:

- What are the cognitive and meta-cognitive strategies that are activated when accomplishing a written test or exam?
- Are students and teachers aware about the usage of cognitive and meta-cognitive strategies in writing test performance?

4. Research Hypotheses

The present research is based on the following hypotheses:

- Students would apply various cognitive and meta-cognitive strategies in the written tests and exams.
- Both students and teachers are unaware about the usage of cognitive and meta-cognitive processes by test-takers.

5. Research Methodology and Design

5.1 Choice of the Method

This research is conducted through the use of descriptive method. It aims at testing the research hypothesis via administrating and analyzing students' and teachers' questionnaires which would help to know the types of cognitive and meta-cognitive processes that can be used by students in written tests and exams, and the teachers' and students' awareness towards the use of such processes.

Research Population and Sample

The research population includes Master one students from the Department of English language at Guelma University. Its sample contains 60 Master one students who are chosen randomly from the whole population. The raison behind selecting Master One students is due to the fact that they are always asked to answer the exam questions, tests, and quizzes. Also, they usually have to prepare their lessons in test data files (TD files). Then, they give the teachers written form after delivering their oral presentations. So, they are expected to apply a number of cognitive and meta-cognitive strategies for presenting their ideas in a good and a well constructed form of writing. Besides, thirty-six teachers at Guelma University were chosen randomly to find out whether they are aware and if they try to raise their students' awareness of the previously mentioned strategies.

Data Gathering Tools

For testing the research hypotheses, the two questionnaires would provide us with enough information about the students' and the teachers' awareness and use of the cognitive and meta-cognitive processes. This would help in discovering more information concerning the application of cognitive and meta-cognitive processes during the written task completion.

6. Structure of the Dissertation

This dissertation is divided into three chapters. The first two ones are theoretical and the third one is practical. The first chapter is entitled "Writing and Test Performance", it is consisted of two sections; the first section is dedicated to the writing skill in general, it is comprised of definition of writing, its nature, its components, and approaches to teaching the writing skill. Then, the second section is devoted to testing, it contains definitions, types, and features of good test. It also include definitions of language learning strategies,

categorization, types of cognitive and meta-cognitive writing processes, and elements determining the choice of learning strategies. Finally, chapter three involves the description, administration, and the analysis of the obtained data from the two questionnaires given to both students and teachers.

Introduction

Writing is one of the four skills in foreign language learning. It is regarded as a very hard and interesting task because it requires the students to write in a cohesive and coherent way with acceptable spelling and suitable grammatical structures. So, writing is a basic skill for learning any language, and the learner has to make a significant effort to attain a quite good level of writing that would enable him to communicate his thoughts and ideas in a successful manner. This chapter is entitled as written tests. It includes two sections; the first one introduces a number of definitions of writing, it also discusses the nature of writing, the elements that help in producing an effective piece of writing. In addition, it explores the various approaches to teaching writing. The second section presents the different definitions of a test as well as its types. Moreover, this chapter provides some principles or features of a good test.

1.1 Definition of Writing

Writing has a great influence on our life. However, it is not facile to give a comprehensible definition of what does writing stand for. This is due to the notable value of writing. According to Coulmas (2003: 1) writing is, "(1) a system of recording language by means of visible or tactile marks; (2) the activity of putting such a system to use; (3) the result of such activity, a text; (4) the particular form of such a result, a script style such as block letter writing; (5) artistic composition; (6) professional occupation". In this quote, Coulmas had made a sequence of definitions of writing. He started by defining writing as a way through which abstract perceptions as thoughts, opinions, ideas, feelings, are transmitted through graphic, morphemes, or letters. That is to say, the process of writing is the act of producing sentences as patterns of utilization. The collection of these utterances is called the language product, and it is used or

employed to fulfill or achieve a certain goal, or to manage a specific task, as when the students are asked to write essays in the learning context.

Moreover, Byrne (1979) has declared that "writing is clearly much than the production of graphic symbols, just as speech is more than the production of sounds" (1). That is to say, writing is not just a matter of typing or recording sentences that we have already in our minds, but the writer has to organize the graphic and symbols according to grammatical, structural rules to construct words which are arranged to form sentences that need to be ordered and correlated in certain manners to form cohesive and coherent paragraphs. Thus, the writing skill is a very complex skill for both native and English as a second language students (ESL), who may find a difficulty in composition tasks because they should be proficient when transforming their ideas into discourse, or linguistic outputs.

Besides, Collins and Gentner (1980) referred to the complexity of the writing task by reporting that writing is a rigorous process that entails mastering lexical items, vocabulary, and the manipulation of structures. The writer, either a native or a foreign English learner should be conscious of the distinct aspects of language as; the grammatical structures, and the appropriateness of the terminology, when creating written products (62). Hyland (2003) claimed that "we do not just write, we write something to achieve some purpose: it is a way of getting something done" (As cited in Medvedeva, 2015:285). It means that the writer should have a linguistic competence for expressing and impressing. Thus, he should have the required knowledge of how to effectively maintain successful written communication.

Furthermore, Nunan (2003: 88) viewed writing as both physical and mental act. It is the process of finding out ideas, thinking about how to develop them into statements and paragraphs in a comprehensible way to communicate them to the reader. So, writing is a

process and a product as well, because the writer invents, plans, then writes and the audience receives and reads the product.

In addition, Longo and Kmiec (2017: 8) stated that "writing is a visual form of communication. It relies on the manipulation of symbols into patterns and the patterns into units of written communication –text- that are recognizable and accessible to someone in a shared language community". In other words, writing is regarded as a creative process through which ideas are communicated within language through the use of graphic representation of ideas (letters). Also, the written product is considered as a social activity applied for expressing desires and needs.

For, Harris (1977; as cited in Medvedeva, 2015: 284) writing is a complex and productive skill "requiring simultaneous use of different abilities which often develop at different rates". This means that writing is a production act that entails the writer to be aware of rules of paragraph development, structural organization of a written product, coherence, cohesion, and to have knowledge of the different rhetorical strategies as cause and effect, comparison and contrast. Thus, the writing process is regarded as a linguistic competence.

1.2 The Nature of Writing

Singer and Bashir (2004; as cited in Marschark & Spencer, 2010: 144) declared that "writing is a complex cognitive activity requiring the coordination of graphomotor and cognitive linguistic abilities, as well as knowledge of social, rhetorical, and text production conventions". The task of writing is regarded as staggering job for the writer/student, since this task demands or entails relating some aspects together. This process starts with being able to express ideas or thoughts through writing. This requires the writer to have some ideas about what to write, and how to write it. He should think about the general organization of the text and the rhetorical devices for the purpose of persuading and impressing the audience or

conveying a certain meaning. Another element that the writer must consider is providing a comprehensive and a well constructed piece of text that suits the readers' needs and interests. At last, the language user starts transforming his ideas into written words that are arranged and combined according to certain structural and grammatical rules to form sentences. Series of sentences are linked together with a number of conjunctions and cohesive ties to form a coherent and cohesive text that is easy to be read and understood.

Cermin and Myhill (2013) believed that writing is an extremely complex task because it is neither spontaneous nor a natural skill that can be acquired in everyday life. That skill is ultimately different from the speaking skill. Since, the former has to be taught, and the later can be acquired through making relationships and being in contact with community members. They have put it as follows: "…writing is not a natural activity…unlike learning to talk, which almost all of us learn naturally through our social interactions, writing is a more deliberative activity which has to be learned" (10).

1.3 Components of Effective Writing

All writers should take into consideration some aspects in order to achieve a high- quality in writing that would help them convey their intended message to the reader.

1.3.1 Style

Lichtenberger, Mather, Kaufman, and Kaufman (2004) have clarified that it is a key feature when composing to express the notions clearly, and to arrange them in a logical order; from the general to the specific or vice versa. Furthermore, to link between 'sentences', 'paragraphs', and 'topics', by using fluent 'transitions', to make writing effective and simple to be understood.

1.3.2 Logical Organization

Hyes, Arndt & Galgano (2012: 91) have claimed that the sentences, paragraphs, or sections, should be joined; what has been preceded with what comes after. Also, the writer should make it clear when moving from one idea to another. Thus, the writer's use of transition would help him make his written product progresses consistently.

1.3.3 Punctuation

Foster (1998: 21) claimed that correct and appropriately positioned or located punctuation is an important sign of a good style, and it makes your writing readable and understood. Any faulty or misemployed punctuation can ruin the meaning and cause mis-interpretation.

In addition, Johnson (1995) argued that improper punctuation can cause bad feeling on the part of readers. When the writers' punctuation is not used in its exact place, readers may become puzzled. This last would create a sense of dissatisfaction for them and they may even stop reading. He added that the writer should not exaggerate in using punctuation marks, or using long sentences with few punctuation marks because this can bring confusion, as it makes it difficult for the reader to decode the message. Thus, punctuation helps the readers comprehend the piece of text the way intonation helps the listeners understand another persons' speech.

1.3.4 Clear and Accurate Writing

Clarity is another major component of writing that the writer should take into account. Bowman and Branchaw (1992) have stated that the writers' main concern is to convey his message in clear manner that is understood by his/her readers. This would help them save time and avoid misinterpretation. This way the writer can gain the readers' support and acceptance of his piece of information (73).

Furthermore, Bowman and Branchaw (1992) provided a number of basic strategies to achieve clarity: (1) Keep sentences short; the writer should avoid long and complex sentences because they make it difficult for readers to understand. Instead, he should use shorter sentences to avoid multiple interruptions or making the composition boring for the readers. (2) Maintain paragraph unity; every paragraph should have concisely one topic sentence and other supporting sentences that refer to and explain the main idea. (3) Improve readability; the writer should use simple words that can be easily understood. Also, he should take the reading level of his readers into consideration. The sentences should be ordered; subject, verb, object. Moreover, he should use short, rather than long paragraphs, provide examples and illustrations to help clarify his main ideas.

Moreover, Lichtenberger et al. (2004) suggested certain techniques for making the written production more effective and clear: (1) Clarify statements; the writer should use the exact words that suit his purpose, and avoid extra, incorrect, and misemployed words. Besides, he has to avoid the use of negation; as 'not'. So, the writer should be concise and precise. (2) Clarify or remove ambiguous terms; if the writer uses technical terms, he should clarify their meaning. Thus, the writer has to use simple language that communicates his message, and avoid 'technical jargon'. (3) Define acronyms and avoid abbreviation; the writer must write the complete name for the first time, then he can use acronyms because they are not known by all persons. However, abbreviations are not acceptable in formal writing. (4) Avoid passive voice; "excessive use of the passive voice makes writing clumsy, dull, and unclear to the reader" (Gardner, 1983; as cited in Lichtenberger et al. 2004). Thus, the use of active voice makes the sentence clear, more direct, vivid and easy to be understood.

1.3.5 Word Choice/ Vocabulary

Heskett (2006) pointed out that the ability to write efficiently and effectively can be carried out only if the writer pays attention when choosing the structures and lexical items. Doing so, would make readers understand the message he wants to convey, and excited to read his

compositions. The writers should choose appropriately the words that would help them in constructing and communicating their intended message successfully, as they have to be aware that some words have different connotations or meanings. The use of effective word choice' denotes the good mastery of the language. He gave seven ways for effective word choice; (1) Write with descriptive words, (2) Use strong visual imagery, (3) Use accurate and precise words to convey a specific meaning, (4) Understand that action verbs give writing energy, (5) Be familiar with language, (6) Use words that sound natural, (7) Listen to how words sound, adding to the meaning of the writing. (25-26)

Allan, McMackin, Dawes and Spadorcia (2009) implied that the writer accurately use the words that fit genre, purpose, and audience. Also, they believed that a well constructed text should include; (1) Language that serves the purpose, reader, and genre, (2) Language that goes beyond over-use words and expressions, (3) Verbs and nouns that are strong and precise,
(4) Words that have an appealing sound, (5) Specialized vocabulary, if appropriate that is characteristics of a particular sociocultural community, (6) Specialized vocabulary, if appropriate, that is explained in the text (195). That is to say, the writer should choose his words carefully, and make sure that each used word indicates exactly what he intends. In addition, he has to know about the connotations or the implicit meaning of the words; to not offend or create ambiguous ideas to the readers.

1.3.6 Spelling

Henry (2003; as cited in Terjesen and Thielking, 2017: 224) explained that being able to spell naturally and correctly is one sign of effective composition. In previous time, they teach students words through repetition. However, this did not give them the required 'knowledge' for becoming competent spellers. They can rather build in their 'memory some spelling patterns in words' just by transforming certain speech sounds into letters consistently.

Graham, Harris & Loynachan (1996; as cited in Terjesm and Thieslking, 2017: 244) said

that one aspect that should be taken into account by students when writing is to spell correctly. This requires knowledge about the way utterances are demonstrated in composition. This last includes how the letters are linked to one another in a sequence, and the phonemic restrictions when forming syllables.

1.3.7 Grammar

Grudzina (2008: 23) has stated that "with a clear understanding of grammar, you will be able to express yourself using the written word". In other words, the writer should know how to express what he means or intends to communicate. This can be achieved by organizing or arranging the words in sentences in a certain order, and according to specific grammar rules. Furthermore, the writer should bear in mind that changing either the form or the placement of the words in a sentence would completely give a different meaning. Thus, the ignorance of these rules and the random use of various word forms would block and confuse the understanding of the readers.

Brooks and Penn (1970: 20) noted that "For one thing, in writing, we must understand the structure of the language, what the parts of speech do, how the words relate to one another, what individual words mean, rules of grammar and punctuation". In other words, the manipulation of the different rhetorical devices, language structures, and speech parts is a crucial aspect of a good writing.

1.3.8 Cohesion and Coherence

Tanskanen (2006) argued that "cohesion refers to the grammatical and lexical elements on the surface of a text which can form connections between parts of the text" (7). That is to say, cohesion is about linking the text pieces. Halliday and Hasan (1976: 292; as cited in Tanskanen, 2006: 31) implied that "however luxurian the grammatical cohesion displayed by any piece of discourse, it will not form a text unless this is matched by cohesive patterning of a lexical kind".

The language producer has to build the text carefully, in which all the sentences stick together and connected through the cohesive ties. This would help the writer in communicating his ideas in an appropriate and effective manner, and his piece of text would appear as one unit.

Also, McNeely (2013: 104) clarified that the writers' thoughts should be linked and organized in a certain way that helps the reader make sense of what he is reading. A skilled writer starts his paragraph with a topic sentence, followed by supporting sentences for reinforcing the main idea. These sentences have to be linked to one another by different rhetorical devices. Besides, the writer has to make it clear when moving from one idea to another through using transitions.

1.4 Approaches to Teaching Writing

1.4.1 The Product Approach

The product approach focuses its attention on the general form of the composition, and stresses some visual or syntactic aspects of language; words, clauses, and sentences must be arranged in a coherent way, and constructed according to certain rules. Hence, in EFL or ESL context, the learning process primarily includes "linguistic knowledge and the vocabulary choices, syntactic patterns, and cohesive devices that comprise essential building blocks of texts". (Hyland, 2003: 3)

Silva (1990; as cited in Hyland, 2003: 3) declared that the product approach is a traditional approach that was emerged in the 1960's as a result of the combination between 'structural linguistics and the behaviorist learning of ESL teaching. The writer should have a great control over grammatical and syntactical structures, and his composition evolves through copying and transforming model texts. This kind of exercises was given to students for examining or checking their mastery of lexical and grammatical patterns in constructing correct and accurate number of sentences or text. In this belief, "writing is regarded as

an extension of grammar –means of reinforcing language patterns through habit formation". (Silva, 1990: 3-4)

Hyland (2003: 3-4) provided a description of the product approach in which he proposes four stages for teaching writing; (1) Familiarization; learners are taught certain grammar and vocabulary usually through a text, (2) Controlled Writing; fixed patterns, often from substitution tables, (3) Guided Writing; learners imitate model texts, (4) Free Writing; learners use patterns they have developed to write an essay, letter, and so forth.

However, the product approach was highly criticized. The students are asked to imitate model texts, and this can cause a lot of problems because each writing presentation, situation, and context differs in terms of content or the theme discussed and the writers' intention. This would confuse and misguide the learners. The second weakness of this approach is that correct and accurate syntax is the only measure of good composition. Because there are some students who can write with no syntactical or grammatical mistakes; but their writing makes no sense, and it does not communicate their intended meaning, which is totally neglected in this approach. (Hyland: 5)

So, product approach is an individual work, which is concerned with the final result of composition. The emphasis is on the form and not meaning, since the learners are required to copy and transform the model text, and to write in an accurate and organized way.

1.4.2 The Process Approach

Harmer (2001: 257) explained that in the process approach, the students move through certain stages; "pre-writing phases", "editing", "redrafting", and finally "publishing work". Besides, Steele (2004; as cited in Klimova, 2013: 148) provides a summary of the process in some points; (1) Text as a resource for comparison, (2) Ideas as starting point, necessitating more than one draft, (3) Focus on purpose, theme, text type, (4) The reader (audience) is emphasized, (5) Collaborative with other peers, (6) Emphasis on creativity.

It means that, in the process approach, the learner constructs a text that aims at informing, persuading his audience, and communicates his intended message i.e. it is reader not writer based. This task is not individual, since more than one learner can cooperate. They are supposed to write more than one rough copy, until they reach the final product. During the process of writing, they think about the topic in hand and express their ideas. In this approach, the main focus is on students' creativity, since; they go through different stages to reach the final draft.

According to Murray (1980: 6; as cited in Brock & Walters, 1992) unlike the traditional "product approach" which emphasizes the final product, the "process approach" focuses on what goes on as writers actually compose. It sees writing as a "process of discovering meaning –rehearsing, drafting, revising, rehearsing- repeated again and again". (23)

The process approach differs from the product approach; the former engaged the learner in a cyclical or recursive process, in which he moves through a number of stages, or pre-writing activities as; planning, writing or drafting, reviewing, before coming up with the final result. This approach pays more attention on how the writer produces his written products. Composition is seen as a process by which meaning is created and discovered. The writers' thoughts are formulated and developed until the end, where only the language user knows what he wants to say. On the other hand, the product approach is mostly viewed as a linear process in which what the student has first written down is the final written paper. Therefore, the process approach directs its attention to the writing skills, and the communicative competence of the writer; in contrast, the product approach focuses only on the linguistic knowledge.

He added that the process approach has some drawbacks and advantages. This activity is time consuming since, it requires the students to think and generate more ideas, writing, and re-writing. Also, when either the teacher or the learners' colleagues view and correct and give feedback to the student, it takes a lot of time. As an advantage, Hyland (2003: 10) stated that the process approach is based on making students aware of the cognitive processes that would

enable them to “plan, define rhetorical problem, and propose and evaluate solution” i.e. before the act of composing; the students collect ideas about certain theme, make an outline about the general organization of these thoughts and at the end they would check if there is a problem with syntactic features of the text, and they solve these problems.

1.4.3 The Genre Approach

Genres are defined by Hyland (2003: 18) as the way through which students apply syntactical patterns and organize them in a certain order for communicating with audiences and achieving the writer’s aim. The teacher, who applies the genre approach in writing, teaches the students that writing is a way for getting something done by taking into consideration the social conventions that control or determine how the writer should build his message. Thus, the genre approach pays more attention to the rhetorical moves, which are used by the writer for communicating and reinforcing his message; as using proofs to support his arguments or point of view. It also concerned with how the written composition is organized and structured, according to the writer’s goals and text type. However, this approach ignores the thinking processes that are involved in writing (Sawyer and Widodo & Renandya, 2016, p.187). This is what can block the learners’ productivity in writing. (Hyland, 2002; as cited in widodo & Renandya, 2016: 187).

1.4.4. The Eclectic Approach

Carrasquillo (1994) believed that “the eclectic approach to ESL teaching incorporates the most appropriate or useful parts of all existing approaches, principles, and theories from the field of language teaching” (125). That is to say, the eclectic approach is consisted of the most significant approaches to teaching ESL learners. The language teacher is required to select the most convenient and workable aspects from each writing approach to decide which one to be used, and to design the classroom tasks and applied activities. Also, he should take into account the learners’ level of proficiency, their individual differences, the learning situation,

or context. Thus, the language teacher should have a good knowledge about all the teaching approaches of writing, as he has to be selective when choosing the approaches that meet the students' requirements.

Brown (1994; as cited in Cowan, 2008: 52) argued that "it may be best to strive for an enlightened eclecticism in language teaching rather than adopting one method of instruction exclusively". It means that, the eclectic approach is more useful and effective in teaching writing, than applying a single approach or procedure of teaching as it offers more chances for a better teaching and successful learning.

1.5 Definition of a Test

Caroll (1968: 46; as cited in Bachman, 1990: 18) stated that "a psychological or educational test is a procedure designed to elicit certain behavior from which one can make inferences about certain characteristics of an individual". That is to say, a test is an instrument used for measuring specific responses and behaviors. It helps in assuming person's specific features or characteristics which are identified according to specific procedures. Generally, a test is used to measure certain language abilities of individuals. Also, Osterlind (2012) defined it as a means of finding out some data which are inspired from an examinee's or an experimental subject's answers. A test is composed of a number of questions which are considered as a 'stimulus', the form of answers is determined according to the question's type, and they are the source from which the individual's ability, trait, or some predispositions can be interpreted (20).

Moreover, Brown (2004) provided another definition of a test as "a method of measuring a person's ability, knowledge, or performance in a given domain" (3). In other words, a test is an instrument constructed in an explicit way in which the test-designer prepares the test questions, their answers, and the scoring system or rubric that are going to be followed while correcting it. Also, a test is designed for measuring the general or specific learning abilities or

competences in language use or learning skills i.e. writing, reading, listening, or speaking skills. From the above definitions, it could be said that a test is a tool used for measuring the students' competence, skills, and knowledge about specific subjects.

1.6 Types of Tests

Tests are considered as a crucial part in teaching foreign languages, since they are employed to determine learners' level, proficiency, and mastery of the language, to classify them according to their learning capacities or knowledge, and to diagnose learners' weaknesses and strengths. Language tests are ranged into various types according to their aims and purposes.

1.6.1 Proficiency Test

According to Sonnenberg (2007), "proficiency tests judge the ability of communication in a foreign language. They can be designed according to the purpose for which the knowledge is needed, or they can be general. These tests are not based on any specific courses". That is to say, proficiency tests are structured to check or assess learners' specific language ability or set of abilities. It is a test used to examine to which extent an individual is skilled or proficient in a certain activity, field of study. In addition, this kind of test is designed to assess if the learners have grasped the required skills and knowledge that have been taught in a specific course, even if they have not taken the course yet. Finally, a proficiency test is generally applied to evaluate the non-native learners' capacities (4).

Proficiency tests are concerned with measuring students' general or overall ability; as they are not fixed with one skill, syllabus, course of study, or curriculum. Before, proficiency tests include a number of multiple choice items on grammar, vocabulary, reading comprehension, and aural comprehension, sample of writing". But, recently an activity about oral production

performance has been added. One feature of proficiency tests is that it has just one score for each activity, this score tends to either approve or reject the learners' passage. Another main feature is that the results are not accompanied with a diagnostic feedback.

Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) is one type of 'standardized proficiency test' that are highly used in the United States of America (USA) as a way to measure the learners' competence to communicate with the use of the English language in real context. This test contains a number of activities; 'written expression', 'listening comprehension', 'reading comprehension', and 'structure' (organizational accuracy). The TOEFL has many drawbacks, first it lacks content validity because it is too long and time consuming. These tests lack face validity since they need to be related to real life situations. Third, it cannot be managed in classes because of time constraints. So, language teachers should choose just one section to test one ability not all of them together (Brown, 2004: 44-45).

1.6.2 Placement Test:

Sonnenberg (2007) considered placement test as the one that specifies a students' acquired knowledge, their skill, level, or proficiency in different fields or themes to assign each one in a certain group, class, or course. The main purpose behind designing this test is to put new students or a student entering a college or university in the correct class, and to provide remedial course work for the ones that take low scores "placement tests are used to allocate students to different levels according to their competence. To ensure their accuracy they need to be designed especially for particular situations" (Sonnenberg, 2007: 4).

Brown (2004: 45) assumed that placement tests are used by institutions to set students in certain sections of an English language curriculum. This kind of test is constructed upon the syllabus and resources that will be used for delivering instructions so that learners will deal with after being assigned in the correct class. Moreover, placement test can be applied by language teachers as a way to find out the students' weaknesses interpreted from the results so

that he/she can plan his course (Davies et al., 1999: 145; as cited in Alonso, 2011: 129).

1.6.3 Diagnostic Tests

Sonnenberg (2007: 4) stated that "diagnostic tests are designed to analyze students' strengths and weaknesses. However, whereas they are sufficient for testing basic skills they are not reliable on complex structures". That is to say, diagnostic testing is used to assess students' performance for determining the learning styles and their preferences, misconception, and learning potentials. The main purpose of these tests is to use their results in determining learners' level of knowledge and what they know about skills. In addition, language teachers use the data interpreted from test results in planning for instructions and providing remedial works.

Harmer (2001: 321) claimed that students' capacities and deficiencies can be specified through the use of diagnostic tests. These tests are intended to decide what teaching techniques would help in students' gaps in knowledge, deficiencies, and the learning difficulties encountered during a course. Hence, students' encountered obstructions can be eliminated.

1.7 Features of a Good Test:

1.7.1 Validity:

Validity is considered as the most difficult criterion of a good test, above all, the important aspect of an effective test. Gronlund (1998: 226) viewed validity as "the extent to which inferences made from assessment results are appropriate, meaningful and useful in terms of the purpose of the assessment" (as cited in Brown, 2004: 22). This means that, the test outcomes should be compatible with the test designer's intended objectives. For example, when making writing tests; if the tester asks his students to make a composition in twenty minutes and write as much words as they can. This test is practical but it is not valid because

it does not measure the real writing proficiency of learners that can be only demonstrated in the structural and grammatical level of the composition.

Moreover, Harmer (2001: 322) declared that "a test is valid if it tests what it is supposed to test". That is to say, test validity can be realized if a test precisely measures what it is intended to measure. For example, a test that measures reading ability should accurately test the student's reading abilities and not other abilities. He added that face validity is one facet of validity that test designers direct more attention to. Face validity is about whether the test looks valid or not.

In this context, Mousavi (2002: 244) stated that the examinee would judge the validity of a test according to certain criteria, if it looks fair, if it assesses the competences or knowledge it aims to assess. Thus, face validity is about the students' subjective views about the reference and usefulness of a test (as cited in Brown, 2004: 26).

1.7.2 Reliability:

Harmer (2001) insisted that reliability is about the consistency of test outcomes. For example, when one group passed the same test two times on two days, before making correction of the first test, the test must realize similar results. In addition, for both groups, who took the same test, the scoring scale should be the same. Furthermore, improving test reliability can be achieved by clarifying test directions or instructions, limiting the range of answers, and confirming or ensuring that test conditions stay constant (322). On the other hand, Brown (2004) stated that, "a reliable test is consistent and dependable" (20-21). That is to say, if the same test is given to one learner or group of learners twice, the results should be the same on each occasion. He also provides a set of elements that would bring the test's unreliability; a problem is either in the test taker, on the scorer, the scoring criteria, test administration, or in the test itself.

Conclusion

In brief, the difficulty of writing necessitates for both teachers and students to acquire the basic knowledge about the nature of the writing skill, the different components that should be taken into account when producing high quality writing. In addition, it is really essential for teachers to be aware of the different approaches to teaching writing, and on which basis to choose a specific approach in his teaching of the writing skill. Chiefly, the teacher should always assess his students writing competence by using a number of test assignments and mid-term exams.

Introduction

The students' success in learning any language is highly linked to their application and orchestration of different language learning strategies. Hence, the selection of the appropriate learning strategy would enable language learners to accomplish any learning task, and also to achieve their intended goals especially while performing in assessment situations as in tests and exams. This chapter introduces different definitions of language learning strategies. It also sheds light on the main classification of language learning strategies proposed by the pioneering researchers in this field. After that, some basic concepts and types of cognitive and meta-cognitive processes are discussed. Lastly, the chapter ends up with a number of factors that influence the choice and the use of language learning strategies.

2.1 Definition of Language Learning Strategies

Language learning strategies are widely used in the educational context because of their great importance and efficacy in fostering the learning process. They have been defined by a number of researchers from various viewpoints. Scarcella and Oxford (1992: 63) defined them as "specific actions, behaviors, steps, or techniques—such as seeking out conversation partners, or giving oneself encouragement to tackle a difficult language task – used by students to enhance their own learning" (as cited in Oxford, 2003: 3). In other words, learning strategies are used by language learners to improve, activate their own learning and make it more effective. Also, Oxford (1990: 8) has given another definition, "learning strategies are specific actions taken by the learner to make learning easier, faster, more enjoyable, more self-directed, and more transferable to new situations" (as cited in Richterich, little, and Holec, 1996: 42). That is to say, language learning strategies are the set of tools applied, consciously, by language learners' for meaningful, quicker, and purposeful self-reliance learning. So, by applying these strategies learners will become autonomous and independent.

Moreover, Chamot and Kupper (1989: 13) provided a general definition for the language learning strategies, “learning strategies are the thoughts and behaviors students use to comprehend, store, and remember new information and skills” (as cited in Graham, 1997: 3). It means that these strategies refer to the set of techniques (behavioral processes) and mental operations applied by language learners for facilitating the acquisition of certain knowledge, managing certain tasks, and achieving comprehension.

The idea we draw from the various definitions mentioned before is that learning strategies are both behavioral and mental actions used by the learners to foster, facilitate, and make the EFL learning process more enjoyable, also to achieve better results. So language learning strategies are learning techniques used to direct learning according to the learners’ preferences.

2.2 Categorization of Language Learning Strategies

From the 1970s, many researchers including linguists and psycholinguists direct their attention towards studying the various language learning strategies because of their big influence on the learning the target language. They tend to study the way successful language learners process new input and knowledge, and the different strategies employed to solve certain problems in the EFL context (Rubin, 1975; Stern, 1975; Naiman et al., 1978; as cited in Lee, 2010: 135).

Consequently, these researchers distinguish lists of language learning strategies which have been divided or categorized into different ways. Three main taxonomies will be introduced hereafter: (1) Rubin’s classification (1975, 1987), (2) O’Malley and Chamot’s classification (1990), and Oxford’s classification (1990).

2.2.1 Rubin's Categorization (1975, 1987)

The awareness towards the influential effect of learning strategies on the learning process was pioneered by Rubin in the mid-seventies. This research was mainly conducted for studying the LLS of proficient/successful learners (Rubin, 1975: 43; as cited in Griffiths, 2013: 5). From the number of observations made by Rubin in real context/classroom, she deduced that effective learners adopt certain characteristics that are appropriately employed to achieve a specific goal or to manage a particular learning activity; as using the context for guessing/interpreting the implicit message/meaning. (Naiman, F, Fröhlich, Stern, & Todesco, 1975; Rubin, 1975; as cited in Oxford, 2003: 10)

Rubin (1987: 23) proposed a categorization of LLS in which she divided them into three main types of strategies: learning, (interactive) communication, and social strategies. This typology is based on the criteria of whether the strategy contributes directly or indirectly to language learning. Among the three, the first two strategies affect directly the process of learning, through 'obtaining', 'storing', 'retrieving', and 'using language'. While, the third one is classified under the indirect strategies. (As cited in Liang, 2009: 199-200)

2.2.1.1 Learning Strategies

Learning strategies are defined as the various procedures used by learners to build and develop their language system, they are the set of actions or steps followed by the students to simplify the processing, storage, and retrieval of linguistic input (Rubin, 1987: 19-23; as cited in Lee, 2010: 136). Learning strategies are also divided into two main categories; cognitive and meta-cognitive strategies. The former refers to the set of techniques applied by language learners ~~to~~ for acquiring knowledge and realizing comprehension.

Furthermore, Rubin (1981) pointed out that the first category is composed of six major cognitive strategies: (1) Clarification/verification; as asking for the way certain words or expressions should be used in their appropriate context since the learning task is not linked to real life situations, (2) Guessing/inductive inference; as using clues from the context, like key words in a sentence or topic sentence, for inferring/interpreting/guessing the meaning of difficult words, (3) Deductive reasoning; as classifying words depending on their shared features (similarity of endings), or deducing grammatical rules analogy, (4) Practice; as imitation, or experimentation (using new words in context and in isolation), (5) Memorization; as repetition of certain information for storing and recalling them later, (6) Monitoring one's own speech and the speech of others; as correcting pronunciation mistakes. Cognitive strategies are proposed by Rubin as way to help students to achieve their learning objectives and become successful learners (As cited in Liu, 2010: 100-101).

The second category is about the meta-cognitive strategies which affect learning in an indirect manner. These strategies imply thinking about thinking before the learning process begins i.e. the learners think about their preferred learning style; being visual, auditory, or kinesthetic, then, they include different techniques or actions as 'planning', 'prioritizing', 'setting goals', and 'self-management' (Rubin, 1987; as cited in Liu, 2010: 101). Meta-cognitive strategies are employed by the learners for ensuring the achievement of their learning purposes.

2.2.1.2 Communication Strategies

They do not have a direct interaction with language learning as they are used just when a breakdown in the communication process occurs or when the learners are faced with a difficulty in understanding and comprehension. These strategies offer learners more chances to exposure of a foreign language as they direct more attention to participating in

conversation, simplifying the ongoing conversation through using gestures for getting the speaker's message understood, or clarifying his original intention (Rubin, 1987; as cited in Liang, 2010: 200). These strategies are applied by learners to communicate their message effectively and to get rid of/overcome the encountered difficulties in comprehension.

2.2.1.3 Social Strategies

They are described as the set of practices, as 'asking questions', 'initiating conversations', 'listening to L2 media' etc, which offer chances for learners to practice their background knowledge (Rubin, 1987; as cited in Liu, 2010: 101). Social strategies are not frequently used in classroom practices; they involve collaborating with classmate in group work and asking teachers for more explanations and clarifications. (Carless, 2007; as cited in Liang, 2010: 200)

2.2.2 O'Malley and Chamout's Categorization (1990)

O'Malley and Chamout (1990) have classified the language learning strategies into three major types; cognitive, meta-cognitive, and social/affective. These broad strategies are also divided into sub-strategies.

2.2.2.1 Cognitive Strategies

They refer to the actions or techniques applied by language learners for performing certain tasks. Cognitive strategies include mental manipulation, transformation of learning materials (Brown and Palincsar, 1982; as cited in Chamot and O'Malley, 1990: 8).These strategies are categorized into eight methods; (1) Rehearsal/auditory representation; is associated with saying the words loudly that has been heard as someone is reading a text , (2) Organization; is about outlining the text to be learned, selecting the main idea from a text, grouping words according to their syntactic and semantic shared features, (3) Inferencing; includes anticipating and guessing the meaning of difficult and unfamiliar words from the context, (4)

Summarizing; is used for learning certain materials, or summarizing what someone has said to make sure that the piece of information has been received and for keeping them active in the working memory, (5) Deduction; is about applying certain rules to understand and facilitate the FL/L2 learning, (6) Imagery; is about forming a visual mental images for enhancing and remembering information, (7), Transfer i.e. employing a previously acquired knowledge for acquiring new learning activities (8) Elaboration; connecting prior knowledge with new one (Weinstein & Mayer, 1986; as cited in O'Malley & Chamot, 1990: 45).

2.2.2.2 Meta-cognitive Strategies

They are known as management strategies which necessitate controlling or planning for learning, monitoring one's understanding and performance, as they include the evaluation of the results after performing a certain language task (Brown, Bransford, Ferrara & Campione, 1983). These strategies involve a number of techniques; (1) Selective and directed attention to the key words in the learning task at hand, (2) planning for the general organization of the linguistic product either written or spoken, (3) Monitoring or analyzing the activity at hand, checking if the knowledge has been acquired in a correct way, (4) Evaluating or checking the task's outcomes after its completion. (Brown et al. 1983; as cited in O'Malley & Chamot, 1990: 44)

2.2.2.3 Social/Affective Strategies

They involve learners in direct contact or interaction with others to assist the learning process. These strategies are categorized into four activities; (1) Co-operation between learners for clarifying, solving problems, and performing a learning task, (2) Asking for further clarification from classmates or teacher through additional explanation, rephrasing, and examples, (3) Self-talk to motivate/encourage oneself that the learning practice/task will be successful for reducing anxiety about the activity in hand, (4) Self-reinforcement through

providing oneself with positive feedback and encouragement by giving rewards when the learning activity has been well performed. (O'Malley & Chamot, 1990: 45)

2.2.3 Oxford's Categorization (1990)

In 1990, the strategy researcher Rebecca Oxford has developed a classification for language learning strategies that is more 'comprehensive' and 'developed' than the previously proposed division models (Jones, 1998; as cited in Liu, 2010: 101). Oxford has developed a model which is called Strategy Inventory of Language Learning (SILL). This model was utilized by a number of researchers ((Ehrman & Oxford, 1989; Oxford & Nyikos, 1989; Phillips, 1991; Green, 1991; as cited in Liu, 2010: 101) who have assumed that the application LLS has a great influence on learners' linguistic competence.

According to the taxonomy proposed by Rebecca Oxford (1990); LLS are classified under two main categories: direct and indirect strategies. The former include "direct learning and use of the subject matter, in this case a new language" are further divided into: memory, cognitive, and compensation strategies. While the latter assist the learning process in an indirect manner, broken down into meta-cognitive, affective, and social strategies. (Ehrman & Oxford, 1990; as cited in Lee, 2010: 40)

2.2.3.1 Direct Strategies

Memory strategies, according to Oxford (1990: 41-42), help language learners to store new knowledge in the 'long-term memory' and retrieving it when necessary. Oxford pointed out that these strategies involve four steps: (1) Creating mental linkages; categorizing information that have been acquired into significant units, (2) Applying images and sounds; creating a visual image in one's mind (imagery), (3) Reviewing well, (4) Employing actions for responding physically to a new expression or input.

Cognitive strategies are employed by language learners for building and checking out knowledge in their minds. They are also used for decoding input, encoding and sending messages in the SL/FL. Furthermore, these strategies involve four techniques; (1) practicing, (2) receiving and sending messages, (3) analyzing and reasoning, (4) creating structure for input and output (Oxford, 1990: 43; as cited in Lee, 2010: 140-141).

Lastly, compensation strategies enable the language learners to use the target language in spite of the insufficient knowledge. These strategies are also called communication strategies, as they are used for accomplishing difficult language tasks through interpreting the meaning of unfamiliar words from the context when listening, reading, asking for colleagues help give the learner the missing word, or using body language to get the message across and keep the communication process on while producing in language while performing speaking and writing tasks. The two main actions included in the compensation strategies are: (1) Guessing intelligently in listening and reading, (2) Overcoming limitations in speaking and writing (Oxford, 1990: 49; as cited in Lee, 2010: 140-141).

2.2.3.2 Indirect Strategies

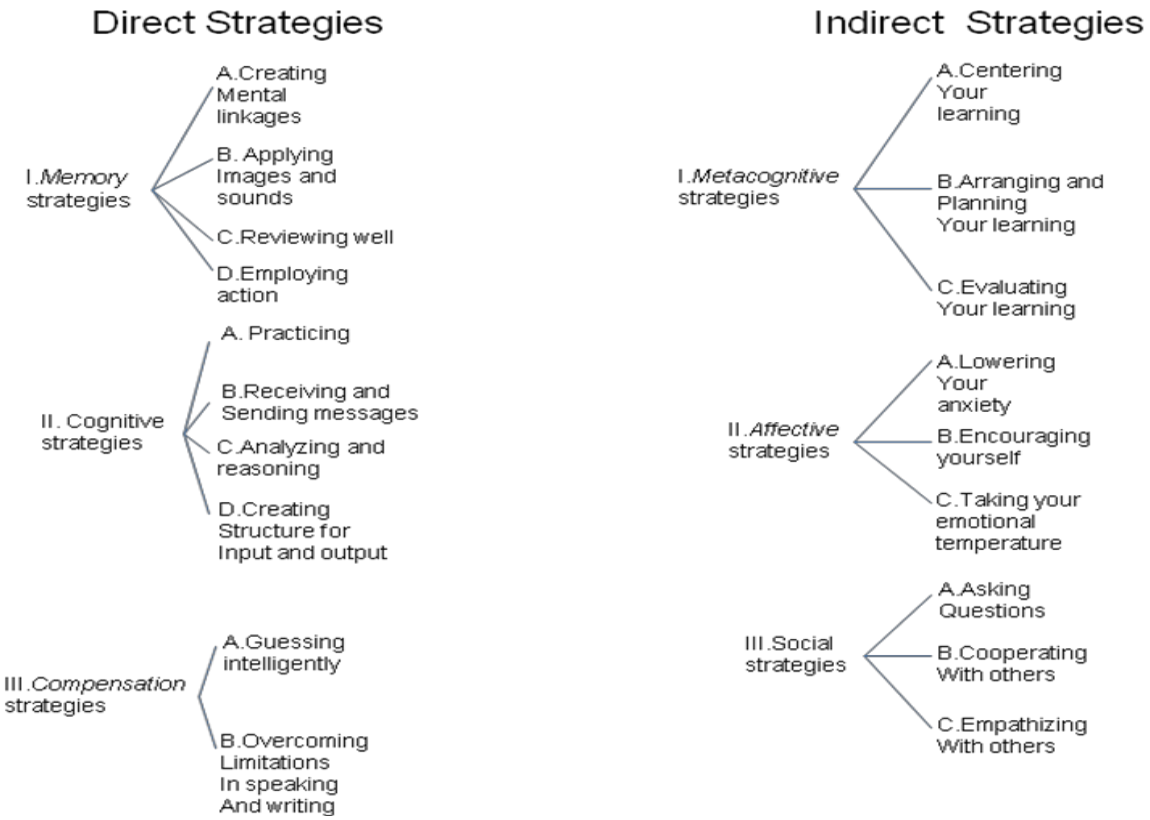
Meta-cognitive strategies enable learners to control and coordinate their learning process through planning for the learning task at hand, arranging materials, focusing attention, and evaluating the strategy that can be used to approach the task, setting goals to be reached, and assessing success as well (Oxford: 1990; as cited in Liu, 2010: 101). These strategies entail three techniques: (1) Centering learning; this technique enables learners to focus their attention and use their competences to accomplish certain learning activities, (2) Arranging and planning learning; it is about enriching and improving one's own knowledge about the target language through reading books and coming in contact with others, organizing one's learning environment, setting goals to be reached, identifying the purpose of a language task

as reading a short story for entertainment, planning for a language task, (3) Evaluating learning i.e. assessing the success of the learning task and recognizing one's own mistakes (Oxford, 1990: 136-137; as cited in Lee, 2010: 140).

Affective strategies are used by language learners as a way to control and regulate their 'feelings', 'motivations', 'self-confidence', and 'attitudes' toward L2/FL learning (Oxford, 1990; as cited in Liu, 2010: 101). These strategies help learners to: (1) Lower their anxiety through using progressive relaxation, deep breathing, or mediation, and using music and laughter, (2) Encourage themselves by saying positive statements, taking risks wisely, and rewarding oneself for good achievements, (3) take their emotional temperature through evaluating their emotions, confidence for pushing themselves to accomplish the learning activities (Oxford, 1990: 140).

Social strategies involve learners in collaborative learning situations in which they can: (1) Ask questions to their teacher, colleagues, or native speakers for clarifying an ambiguous point, verifying their answers, or correcting committed errors, (2) co-operate with peers, colleagues or proficient users of the SL/FL for enhancing their learning skills, (3) Empathize with others, in which they are required to develop cultural understanding and tolerance for becoming aware of others' thoughts and feeling (Oxford, 1990: 144-145). Social strategies help learners to co-operate with others and offer them opportunities to learn the target language and its cultural norms.

Figure2.1. Oxford's Categorization of Language Learning Strategies (1990)



2.3 Types of Cognitive Writing Processes

A number of researchers as (Beare, 2000; Victori, 1995; as cited in Mafton & Seyyedrezaei, 2012: 1598) pointed out that writing strategies are of great importance since they are seen as the only way to differentiate skillful from less skillful writers. Many investigators have directed their attention to find out the different cognitive/mental strategies applied by writers while composing (Flower & Hayes, 1981; as cited in Negari, 2011: 299). Wenden (1991) defined the cognitive strategies as the mental actions or procedures that the learners employ for receiving, acquiring new knowledge, and for managing specific learning activities. These strategies are also applied to solve problems and get rid of the encountered difficulties during the learning process (as cited in Mafton & Seyydrezaei, 2012: 1599).

Wenden (1991) suggested six cognitive strategies that can be applied in writing tasks as; clarification, retrieval, resourcing, deferral, avoidance, verification.

2.3.1 Clarification

O'Malley and Chamot (1990: 45) pointed out that this strategy involves 'eliciting from a teacher or peer additional explanation', 'rehearsing', or 'examples'. Wenden (1991; as cited in Mafton & Seyydrezaei, 2012: 1599) provided a set of actions applied by the learner for clarifying ambiguous parts of the task in hand such as self-questioning, hypothesizing, defining terms, and comparing. Thus, this strategy helps the language learners to achieve comprehension.

2.3.2 Retrieval

Retrieval is one of the most important cognitive writing strategies because the writer should generate ideas for the content by retrieving or recalling the information stored in his memory (Hayes & Flower, 1980; as cited in Galbraith, Waes, and Torrance, 2007: 152). According to Wenden (1991, as cited in Mafton & Seyydrezaei, 2012: 1599) this strategy includes; re-reading aloud or silently what had been written, writing in a lead-in word or expression, re-reading the assigned question, self-questioning, writing till the idea would come, summarizing what had just been written (in terms of content or of rhetoric), thinking in one's native language. Thus, this strategy is a way of brainstorming ideas and generating information that would help the writer to construct his text.

2.3.3 Resourcing

It is a strategy used by language learners for finding out additional information about the text topic, and checking spelling through either asking the researcher or relying on dictionary (Wenden, 1991; as cited in Mafton & Seyydrezaei, 2012: 1599). This strategy includes using

the target language reference materials such as dictionaries, encyclopedias, or textbooks (O'Malley & Chamot, 1990).

2.3.4 Deferral

It refers to instances of language use in writing situations where there would be an interference from the mother tongue into the use of second or foreign language. In some cases, English students resolve to thinking in their native language while writing by the use of English words and vocabulary. This is what is referred to as deferral strategy (Wenden, 1991; as cited in Mafton & Seyydrezaei, 2012: 1599).

2.3.5 Avoidance

This strategy is used by language learners during the writing process, whenever they was not sure about a certain word, sentence, or a particular structure, they avoided using it and instead they use structure that they are sure about to construct their piece of writing. (Wenden, 1991; as cited in Mafton & Seyydrezaei, 2012: 1599)

2.3.6 Verification

It refers to the students' act of verifying and reviewing what has been written down. It also involves checking all the whole composition, the main ideas, and if they are written in a coherent way (Wenden, 1991; as cited in Mafton & Seyydrezaei, 2012: 1599).

2.4 Types of Meta-cognitive Writing Processes

When meta-cognition is associated with the writing, it concerns with the way learners comprehend and control the cognitive writing strategies, and how they employ these processes for achieving certain goals. (Xing, wang, & spencer, 2008: 46; as cited in Goctu, 2017: 85). Meta-cognitive writing strategies were defined by Wenden (1991) as the mental

techniques applied by the students for regulating/controlling the process of learning. These strategies help the learners for the accomplishment of the writing activities and for planning, monitoring, and evaluating of what has been written, down and learning progress as well. (As cited in Mafton & Seyyedrezaei, 2012: 1599)

2.4.1 Planning

Victori (1995; as cited in Mafton & Seyyedrezaei, 2012: 1599) emphasized that planning is one of the influential meta-cognitive writing strategies in which the writer organizes a plan for which ideas to include and develop for constructing the piece of text, and set objectives behind the general planned organization of the text and the techniques that will be applied for developing and coming up with the final product. Moreover, Goctu (2017: 86) pointed out that planning strategies include the writer's arrangement for goals to be achieved, the readers interests, and the appropriate procedures to be applied. These strategies are used in the pre-writing stage but there are some writers, who use them even when composing. They help the writer plan for what tense to write with, what parts to include, what ideas to add or omit, and how to order them.

2.4.2 Monitoring

The writers tend to employ monitoring strategies to verify and control the development of their composition, it is also used for checking their intended message if it is well constructed or not. Monitoring strategies are also applied for identifying the obstacles that would hinder the writing process (Victori, 1995). Furthermore, Goctu (2017: 86) claimed that the monitoring strategies help the writer to direct the writing process while producing a piece of text, and to check the general progress in terms of the content and the text arrangement, and the specific progress in terms of grammatical structures and other writing conventions as punctuation and capitalization.

2.4.3 Evaluating

In this stage, the writer tries to assess if his goals are fulfilled or not, also to evaluate the planned ideas, as well as the modifications that have been made before starting the composition (Victori, 1995; as cited in Mafton & Seyyedrezaei, 2012: 1599). In addition, evaluating strategies take place in the post-writing stage and they are employed by writer for checking and assessing the text content, the language, structural and grammatical level, and the efficacy of the strategies that have been employed for performing the task. These strategies can be best used in group or pair work where the students can exchange their written texts, assess them, and leave comments or discuss modifications to be made for improvements. (Goctu, 2017: 86)

Table2.1. Cognitive and Mata-cognitive Writing Strategies by Wenden (1991)

Metacognitive Strategies	Cognitive Strategies	
Planning Evaluation Monitoring	Clarification Retrieval Resourcing Deferral Avoidance Verification	Self-question Hypothesizing Defining terms Comparing Rereading aloud or silently what had been written Writing in a lead-in word or expression Rereading the assigned question Self-questioning Writing till the idea would come Summarizing what had just been written (in terms of content or of rhetoric) Thinking in one's native language Ask researcher Refer to dictionary

2.5 Elements Determining the Strategy Choice

There is a number of intrinsic and extrinsic factors that may affect the learners' choice and use of language learning strategies. Researchers in this field as Rubin (1975), Bialystok (1979), Abraham & Vann (1987, 1990), Oxford (2003, 1989), Oxford & Nyikos (1989), Chamout & Kupper (1989), Ehrman & Oxford (1995), have pointed to some of these elements, among them: personality traits, language proficiency, motivation, and learning styles.

2.5.1 Personality Traits/Five Factor Model

Each student's personality is constructed upon a number of traits/characteristics. Costa and McCrae (1992; as cited in Obralic & Mulalic, 2017: 78-79) claimed that there are five features that characterizes learners' personality: openness to experience, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness and neuroticism, they are called 'the five factor model'.

Firstly, openness to experience is about learners who seek to be engaged in different language tasks, and to be involved in new learning experiences. Secondly, conscientiousness is related to honest and hardworking learners who are creative and like their work to be appropriately planned and made. Thirdly, extraversion is the personality trait of being an extroverted learner who prefers collaborative works/tasks. It is the personality trait that characterizes learners who tend to use social learning strategies. Fourthly, agreeableness is about the learners who like to help their colleagues and do what suit them. Fifthly, neuroticism is the personality trait that characterizes learners who have instable feelings; they are usually stressed and anxious; for instance, when they are asked to perform a certain task they feel afraid and less confident and they do not utilize a variety of strategies. At last, it can be said that learner's personality type determines his choice of language learning strategies. The example that can be given as an illustrations that an extrovert student prefer employing

social strategies, and likes to work in pairs or group, and asking for clarification or help from others.

2.5.2 Language Proficiency

Different researches have indicated that competent and proficient learners are the ones who tend to use a variety of language learning strategies rather than the less proficient learners (Rubin, 1975; as cited in Lee, 2010: 142). Moreover, Oxford and Nyikos (1989) investigated that there is a link between the learners' level of proficiency and the use of LLS. Both researchers have used SILL test (Strategy Inventory for Language Learning) to investigate university students, and they came to the conclusion that learners' self-classification of their proficiency level is associated with their choice and application of LLS; for example, learners who believe that they are proficient in language skills (listening, speaking, reading) are more likely to be aware and apply a variety of LLS (As cited in Lee, 2012: 143).

2.5.3 Motivation

Motivation is commonly defined as either the internal or external driving force that pushes a person to do or achieve something. In the educational context, it is the primary factor that determines the learners' engagement to perform a certain task and willingness to learn. Gardner (1985; as cited in Khamkhien, 2010: 72) claimed that motivation is the major source which directly affects the students' language learning. He added that motivation includes four elements; 'a goal', 'effort', 'want', and 'attitudes' toward the learning task. Furthermore, Oxford and Nyikos (1989) claimed that motivation is another factor affecting strategies choice and use. Thus, highly motivated learners employ a variety of language learning strategies regularly, such as good and high achievements in a certain learning task.

2.5.4 Learning Styles

Lightbown and Spada (1999: 58) defined learning styles as "an individual's natural, habitual, and preferred way of absorbing, processing, and retaining new information and skills". This means that learning styles refer to the learners' personal and specific behaviors which are used for acquiring new knowledge or learning a language. For example, an auditory learner who likes conversations, lectures with oral instructions and directions, they find themselves more comfortable with the use of social strategies and they will tend to use this type of strategies more than visual learners might do. When pointing out to this kind of relationship, Oxford (2001) claimed "when learner consciously chooses strategies that fit his or her learning style…, these strategies become a useful toolkit for active, conscious, and purposeful self-regulation of learning" (55).

Conclusion

The new language learning system shifted attention to observing and studying what kinds of techniques that the learners use as a way to fulfill progress in their level of proficiency, and the result was the application of a set of language learning strategies. Besides, 'the cognitive and the meta-cognitive processes are highly emphasized as the major tool for achieving success. Therefore, the learners who are aware of the appropriate use of the language learning strategies are the likely ones to make an effective learning and get successful outcomes.

Introduction

The present study intends to investigate the use of cognitive and meta-cognitive processes in written tests. It involves Master One students of the English language at the department of English in Guelma University; this sample has been chosen randomly. Following a descriptive method, a questionnaire has been conducted for the purpose of collecting data about the students' attitudes and views about the use of the previously mentioned strategies.

Thus, the present chapter is devoted to the questionnaires' presentation, administration, analysis, discussion and the interpretation of the results. At last, it concludes with a number of pedagogical implications and recommendations.

3.1 The Learners' Questionnaire

3.1.1 Choice of the Sample

The present study involves Master One students of the English language at the department of English in Guelma University; this sample has been chosen randomly. On the one hand, following a descriptive method, a questionnaire has been conducted for the purpose of collecting data about the students' attitudes and views about the utilization of the previously mentioned strategies. The research questions were answered by sixty students (60) students. On the other hand, the teachers' questionnaire was administered to thirty teachers from the English department at Guelma University.

3.1.2 Administration of the Learners' Questionnaire

The study takes place at the Department of English, 8 Mai 1945 Guelma University. The questionnaire has been administered for Master One students on May the 7th, 2018. It has been randomly distributed to 60 students chosen from the whole population (66 students). The students were very co-operative with the researcher since all the answered copies were returned on the same day. The obtained data have been presented in tables through using

percentages for multiple-choice questions, yes/no questions, and open-ended questions in which students provide their opinions and further comments. After that, the questionnaires results have been analyzed relying on a descriptive statistical method.

3.1.3 Description of the Learners' Questionnaire

The students' questionnaire intends to explore the role of cognitive and meta-cognitive strategies in the students' performance in written tests. Throughout the questionnaire, the students are mainly required to answer a number of close-ended questions with some occasions where they can state opinions freely. It is divided into three main sections; general information, the writing skill, and the use of cognitive and meta-cognitive strategies in written tests.

The first section is designed to get general information about the language learners. It contains two questions. Question (Q1) is about students' learning experience; it indicates the number of years they experienced instruction in English. While, the second question (Q2) shows the students' classification of their level in English.

The second section is about the writing skill. It includes four questions from question three to question six (Q3-Q6), Question three (Q3) asks about the importance and the value of the writing skill. Question four (Q4) seeks for identifying whether the students consider writing difficult, and if the answer is 'yes' the opportunity is given to them to state the reason. Further, in question five (Q5) the students are asked about the writing aspects that help in producing a well constructed and effective piece of writing, and they are given the chance to add other elements if they have. After that, in question six, the target sample is questioned if they follow all the writing stages during the act of writing or not, and again they are given the opportunity to justify their answer if it is yes, and to choose the stage (s) that they do not pass through if they answered by no.

The third section, ranging from question seven to question 26, is entitled "the use of cognitive and meta-cognitive strategies in written tests". It represents the core of the study as it contains the major variables of the present research. Question 7 and 8 respectively seek for identifying whether the language learners take assessments or not, and how often they do. Afterwards, the section is divided into two parts; the former is about cognitive strategies inventory list where the students are required to answer a number of questions about the different cognitive strategies they might apply when writing in a test or exam. In each question, they answer by selecting a choice among 'always', 'sometimes', or 'never'. Question 9 (Q9) asks about re-reading the the assigned question or the task instruction several times until comprehending it. Question 10 is concerned with the practice of taking notes while retrieving or remembering information. In addition, they are asked about writing continuously without stopping until an idea comes (question 11). Question twelve (Q12) seeks to find out about the summarization of what has been written down. Whereas, in question (13), students are questioned if they translate the question items and tasks to their first language/mother tongue, before they answer. Besides, in question 14, they are asked about their use of the background knowledge to infer the meaning of difficult words. Whereas, Question fifteen (Q15) deals with the students' revision and verification of what has been written down. Moreover, in Q 16 students are questioned whether they ask the teacher of the assigned test for further clarification if they are faced with a problem in a given, and, if they classify terms according to their shared features in order to eliminate irrelevant elements (Q17).

The second part of the third section focuses on the students' use of meta-cognitive strategies by students in written tests. In question eighteen (Q18), the students' are asked if they plan on how to approach or complete a test or exam. Then, the students are questioned if they start by answering the easy questions and leave the difficult ones later (question 19). Also, question twenty (Q20) seeks to find out if learners look for the marks given for each question before starting to answer the test or exam, while in question twenty-one (Q21), learners are questioned

if they take into consideration their set of goals and purposes while answering. In question (22), learners are asked if they question themselves if they are doing their best when managing or dealing with the task in hand. Furthermore, they are questioned if they re-read and criticize what they have written down (question 23), and if they correct their mistakes immediately whenever they occur in their written work (question 24). In question twenty-five (Q25), the students are asked if they carefully recheck their answers after producing the final written product. In the last question 26, students are invited to provide further comments or suggestions concerning the given topic.

3.1.4 Analysis of the Learners' Questionnaire

Section One: General Information

Q1: How long have you been learning the English language?

……..year(s).

Table3.2. ***Number of the Years of Studying English***

	Number	**Percentage**
11 years	49	81,6 %
12 years	9	15 %
13 years	2	3,33 %
Total	60	100%

As it is mentioned in table 3.2, which represents students' answers concerning the number of years they received instructions in English, the majority of the students (81, 6 %) studied English for 11 years, whereas 15% of them studied it for 12 years. However, only 3, 33 % have studied English for 13 years; this indicates that the majority of language learners are serious and have not failed in their academic carrier in their study.

Q2: Where would you classify your level in English?

a) Very good

b) Good

c) Average

d) Bad

e) Very bad

Table 3.3. Students' Classification of their Level in English

	Number	**Percentage**
Very good	4	6,66%
Good	34	56,66%
Average	22	36,66%
Bad	0	0%
Very bad	0	0%
Total	60	100%

From the obtained outcomes, it is clear that the majority of the students (56, 66%) conceive their level as good. This reveals that they possess effective learning skills and abilities, and that they have acquired a sufficient knowledge base about the English language. Whereas, 36, 66% of the students consider their level as average. This indicates that the students need to improve their level through getting further instructions, practices, extra time, and hard work. On the other hand, the remaining students (6, 66%) have opted for very good; this implies that they attain a high level of attention, accuracy, and concentration, also they master the basic rules of the target language. But, none of the learners considers his/her level as bad or very bad.

Section Two: The Writing Skill

Q3: Do you think that attaining a good level in writing is important?

a) Yes

b) No

Table3.4. The Importance of Attaining a Good Level in Writing

	Number	Percentage
Yes	58	96,66%
No	2	3.33%
Total	60	100%

Concerning the students' views towards the importance of attaining a good level in writing, the majority (96, 66%) have answered "yes". This implies that the students acknowledge the importance of the writing skill in their learning process. However, only 3,33% have claimed that it is not important. This indicates that they are not aware about the benefits of attaining a good level in writing in learning English or they face difficulties in mastering that skill.

Q4: How do you find the writing skill?

a) Very difficult

b) A bit difficult

c) Easy

d) If it is difficult, please, explain why

……

Table3.5. ***The Students' Views about the Difficulty of the Writing Skill***

	Number	**Percentage**
Very difficult	7	11,66%
A bit difficult	41	68,33%
Easy	12	20%
Total	60	100%

This question aims at eliciting the students' views about the writing skill. The table 3.4 indicates that 68, 33% of the students have said that the writing skill is a bit difficult. So, they are aware that writing is a rigorous and demanding act which requires a lot of effort and a hard work, and it is obvious that they are still encountering some difficulties (as lack of vocabulary/appropriate words, a problem in the level of writing mechanics) that may hinder their writing process. 11, 66% of the students have claimed that the writing skill is very difficult; this implies that they face a lot of obstacles and barriers in their writing process.

However, only (20%) consider writing as an easy task. This indicates that they master all the necessary rules, components, and principles of the writing skill.

Q5: What is the writing aspect/element that makes your writing good and effective?

a) Style

b) Organization

c) Punctuation

d) Vocabulary

e) Spelling

f) Cohesion and Coherence

G) Grammar

Table3.5. ***The Most Important Aspect/Element for Effective Writing***

	Number	**Percentage**
Style	35	58%
Organization	21	35%
Punctuation	20	33,33%
Vocabulary	34	56,66%
Spelling	11	18,33%
Cohesion and coherence	47	78,33%
Grammar	40	66,66%

As shown in table 3.5, the great majority of students (78, 33%) have claimed that cohesion and coherence are the most important aspects for effective writing. This indicates that the students are aware that a necessity of a unified piece of text that requires the appropriate use of rhetorical devices and cohesive ties to stick ideas and thoughts together. On the one hand, 66, 66% of the students indicated that grammar is most important for them, 58% of them said style, 56, 66% went for vocabulary, 35% pointed out organization, 33, 33% have opted for punctuation. These results indicate that the students acknowledge the efficacy of these components on improving their writing proficiency, and demonstrate that they are in need of practicing the various elements of writing with more emphasis on grammar, style, vocabulary, organization, punctuation. On the other hand, just 18, 33% went for spelling; this implies that not many learners appreciate the effectiveness of making correct spelling in compositions. Thus, on the basis of the students' responses; the writing elements can be ranged according to the level of importance that they proposed as follows: (1) Cohesion and coherence, (2) Grammar, (3) Style, (4) Vocabulary, (5) Organization, (6) Punctuation, (7) Spelling.

Q6: In your writing, do you proceed through all the writing stages?

a) Yes

b) No

Table3.7. ***Students Proceeding through all the Writing Stages***

	Number	**Percentage**
Yes	21	35%
No	39	65%
Total	60	100%

The results reveal that the vast majority 65% of the students do not proceed through all the writing stages. This implies that they focus more on the product when producing compositions and totally ignore the process of writing because they write under pressure since they do not have enough time (time constraints) in exams or quizzes to follow all the stages and write at ease. So, all of them avoid the stages that need time as the pre-writing, and revising, and sometimes they try to mix between some stages like pre-writing and drafting, or revising while editing for saving time. Whereas, 35% of the students follow all the writing stages (pre-writing, drafting, revising, editing) and direct more attention to the process of writing. This may indicates that they are aware that a high quality and a well constructed piece of writing requires the step-by-step writing and making more effort in a limited time.

Section Three: The Use of Cognitive and Meta-cognitive Strategies in Written Tests

Q7: Does your language teacher make tests in writing?

a) Yes

b) No

Table3.8. Teachers' Assessment in Writing

	Number	Percentage
Yes	35	58.83%
No	25	41.66%
Total	60	100%

Table 3.7 shows the students' responses to the question that if their language teacher make assessments in writing or not, 58, 83% of them said that their teachers tests. This indicates that the teachers are aware of the positive effects and importance of tests/assessments in raising the students' proficiency level in producing compositions. However, 41, 66% of them answered 'No'; this result can demonstrate that some teachers neglect the role of making written tests in ameliorating the students' proficiency in writing.

Q8: How often does your teacher make writing tests/assessments?

Table3.9. ***Frequency of Teacher Assessment in Writing***

	Number	Percentage
Always	0	0%
Usually	0	0%
Often	14	23.33%
Sometimes	22	36.66%
Rarely	18	30%
Never	6	10%
Total	60	100%

The results show that the majority of the students (36, 66%) have said that their teachers sometimes make writing tests; this implies that some teachers do not really make big efforts for raising their students' writing proficiency, since they should assess their students' writing level and ability, besides their language skills. 23, 33% of the students have chosen often; this indicates that there are some teachers who motivate their students and encourage them to write by making assessments/tests for working on improving their level in writing. 30% and 10% of the students have opted for rarely and never; this implies that minority part of the teachers do not make much effort to improve their students' level, and they neglect the efficacy of making assessments in their classes. However, no one has opted for 'always' and 'usually' options.

A. Cognitive Strategies Inventory

Q9: Do you re-read the assigned question or what has been written down several times to better understand it?

a) Always

b) Sometimes

c) Never

Table3.10. Students' Use of Re-reading the Questions in Tests or Exams

	Number	**Percentage**
Always	36	60%
Sometimes	21	35%
Never	3	5%
Total	60	100%

As it is indicated, 60% of the students have answered that they always re-read the assigned question or what has been written down several times in order to help them better understand it. This means that the majority of the language learners apply the retrieval, resourcing, and clarification strategy and they are aware of the benefits of re-reading in assisting them in the accomplishment of written tests' tasks. Whereas, the other students (35%) have concurred that they sometimes re-read the assigned question or what they have composed, which implies that they do not give much interest for the resourcing, retrieval, and clarification strategy, hence stored information in their memory would not be activated, accordingly their writing would not progress in a good way. Finally, 5% of them have reported that they never reread the written tests' or exams' question before the writing process. This result reveals that they never use strategy when being faced with a written task.

Q10: Do you take notes while retrieving or remembering information?

a) Always

b) Sometimes

c) Never

Table3.11. Students' Use of Note-taking in Tests and Exams

	Number	**Percentage**
Always	34	56.66%
Sometimes	17	28.33%
Never	9	15%
Total	60	100%

As shown in table 3.10, most of the target language students (56, 66%) have claimed that they always take down the information or key ideas to assist them retrieve, remember and organize their language output. This indicates that they appreciate the efficacy of taking notes while retrieving information and its benefits in generating more ideas for the purpose of building a well constructed piece of writing in terms of both the form and the content. However, 28, 33% of the students replied that they sometimes try to take notes while retrieving information; consequently, the retrieval and resourcing strategies are applied but not to a large extent may be because of the lack of the awareness of its efficacy in raising their level in writing. Lastly, 15% of them have asserted that they never/do not use this strategy when composing; which implies that they neglect and ignore the importance of such type of cognitive strategies.

Q11: Do you write continuously without stopping, until an idea comes?

a) Always

b) Sometimes

c) Never

Table3.12. Students' Use of Continuous Writing in Tests and Exams

	Number	**Percentage**
Always	15	25%
Sometimes	30	50%
Never	15	25%
Total	60	100%

It is shown that only 25% of the students declared that they always write without stopping for brainstorming ideas when they feel blank to help them retrieve and transform thoughts into words, and to arrange them according to their logical relations. So, they apply the resourcing strategy through this act of the continuous writing to perform writing tests or exams. While, half of the sample (50%) have asserted that they sometimes do that. Moreover, the remaining part of the students (25%) admitted they never use this technique; and this may reflect their total ignorance of this strategy during the writing process.

Q12: Do you try to summarize what has just been written?

a) Always

b) Sometimes

c) Never

Table3.13. ***Students' Summarization of their Compositions***

	Number	**Percentage**
Always	12	20%
Sometimes	31	51.66%
Never	17	28.33%
Total	60	100%

As demonstrated in the table 3.13, it can be noticed that half of the sample (51, 66%) said that they sometimes try to summarize their writings when taking tests and exams. Also, this process assists the learners to retrieve further information to fill in the gaps or the missing ideas. This implies that the majority of language learners apply both strategies; the retrieval strategy and resourcing strategy which they can help them achieve better results and enhance

their performance as well. While, some of them (20%) replied that they always do that, which indicates their awareness of the efficacy of applying both strategies in raising their level of proficiency in writing. However, 28, 33% of the sample answered that they never tried to use such technique. Thus, they ignore the use of both strategies either because of the lack of awareness, lack of interest, or time.

Q13: Before you answer, do you translate the question items and tasks into your first language?

a) Always

b) Sometimes

c) Never

Table3.14. ***Students' Translations into their Native Language in Tests and Exams***

	Number	**Percentage**
Always	14	23.33%
Sometimes	29	48.33%
Never	17	28.33%
Total	60	100%

Based on the results of table 3.13, most of the target language students (48, 33%) sometimes employ their mother tongue as a resort when performing writing tasks in the target language (English) for the sake of assisting them to comprehend the task or essay assigned question. Furthermore, 23, 33% of the students reported that they always utilize their native or first language, and 28, 33% of them do not use it at all. Hence, the majority of students tend to employ the deferral strategy while performing tests, exams, or writing tasks to increase their

understanding and to know what to write about the topic in hand, but the overuse of this strategy may turn to a negative result.

Q14: Do you use your background knowledge to infer the meaning of difficult words?

a) Always

b) Sometimes

c) Never

Table3.15. ***Students' Use of Background Knowledge in Inferring the Meaning of Difficult Words in Tests and Exams***

	Number	**Percentage**
Always	39	65%
Sometimes	18	30%
Never	3	5%
Total	60	100%

From the students' responses in table 3.15, 65% of the students always rely on their prior knowledge to guess the meaning of the unfamiliar words, and 30% of the sample use it sometimes. Whereas, only 5% of the students declared that they never use this strategy. Therefore, these results reveal that the majority of the students apply the retrieval strategy in order to understand the meaning of certain words from what has been learned before.

Q15: Do you revise or verify what you have written down?

a) Always

b) Sometimes

c) Never

Table3.16. ***Students' Revision and Verification of their Compositions in Tests and Exams***

	Number	**Percentage**
Always	34	56.66%
Sometimes	22	36.66%
Never	4	6.66%
Total	60	100%

According to the results obtained, the majority of the students representing 56, 66% declared that they always check their composition; they try to verify it in terms of the main idea and the coherence or unity of the whole text in order to make some modifications for further clarification of the meaning. Also, other group of students (36, 66%) replied that they sometimes use this strategy; this implies that the verification and clarification strategies are essentially used by more than half of the language learners. And 6, 66% from them has announced that they never verify their writing which indicates that they do not give much importance to correcting the committed mistakes and they are still far away from applying the verification and clarification strategies while performing written tests or exams.

Q16: When facing a problem in a given question, do you ask the teacher of the assigned test for clarification?

a) Always

b) Sometimes

c) Never

Table3.17. ***Students' Questioning for Clarification from their Teacher of the Test***

	Number	**Percentage**
Always	14	23.33%
Sometimes	33	55%
Never	13	21.66%
Total	60	100%

The sample of the students have been asked whether they try to elicit further explanation, or some examples from the examiner or tester for further clarification when being faced with a problem in understanding the tests' or exams' question. Thereupon, 50% have answered that they sometimes do that for the sake of increasing comprehension, avoiding ambiguity, and the clarification of their thoughts and ideas for the purpose of communicating them clearly. In addition, 23, 33% of them said that they always do that. This means that the majority of the sample are totally or partially interested in structuring a meaningful piece of text through the application of the clarification and avoidance strategies to ameliorate their performance in writing tests' or exams. The remaining 21, 66% replied that they never use that strategy while taking a written test or exam.

Q17: Do you classify terms according to their shared features in order to eliminate irrelevant elements?

a) Always

b) Sometimes

c) Never

Table3.18. ***Students' Use of Words' Grouping/Classification***

	Number	**Percentage**
Always	0	0%
Sometimes	9	15%
Never	51	85%
Total	60	100%

As illustrated in table 3.18, 85% of the students declared that they never group words or concepts according to their various characteristics. Whereas, only 15% of them said that they sometimes try to get rid of unrelated elements through putting them in groups. Consequently, this may signify that EFL learners are not always aware about benefits of the avoidance strategy use in writing.

B. Meta-cognitive Strategies Inventory

Q18: After I preview the test or exam, I planned on how to approach and complete it.

a) Always

b) Sometimes

c) Never

Table3.19. ***Students' Planning in a Test or Exam***

	Number	**Percentage**
Always	10	16.66%
Sometimes	30	50%
Never	60	33.33%
Total	60	100%

The results of table 3.19 manifested that 50% of the students sometimes plan for what to write, how to write, and in which way to answer the written task questions to assist them develop their writing in an organized way. This reveals that half of the sample makes use of the planning strategy before they start to write and during the writing process (planning in pre-writing and while writing). Only, 16, 66% always utilize that strategy; which implies that they are aware and responsible of their learning; since they self-direct and regulate the writing process. However, the other 33, 33% start writing directly without using that strategy. This latter indicates that they are not aware of the planning strategy in the learning process in general and in written tests in particular.

Q19: I started by answering the easy questions and leave the difficult ones later.

a) Always

b) Sometimes

c) Never

Table3.20. ***Students' Way of Answering Task Questions in Tests and Exams***

	Number	**Percentage**
Always	45	75%
Sometimes	12	20%
Never	3	5%
Total	60	100%

Based on table 3.20 results, most of the target sample representing 75% reported that they always begin with the handy questions first and then the difficult ones to save more time, and to successfully accomplish the exam or test task in hand. 20% of the students sometimes use

these strategies when performing writing tasks. This demonstrates that the students who answered with ‘always’ and ‘sometimes’ make use of both the strategies of monitoring and planning. While, just 5% of the learners claimed that they never use these strategies may be because of their lack of interest or ignorance of the planning and monitoring strategies.

Q20: I look for the marks given for each question before starting to answer the test or exam.

a) Always

b) Sometimes

c) Never

Table3.21. ***Learners' Review of the Scores of Questions in Written Tests and Exams***

	Number	**Percentage**
Always	29	48.33%
Sometimes	22	36.66%
Never	9	15%
Total	60	100%

As displayed in table 3.21, it can be noticed that 48, 33% of the students always make a review on all the scores of the exam questions. So, the learners apply the planning and evaluation strategy to decide which question to answer first. The same justification is given for those 36, 66% of the language learners who answered that they sometimes use this strategy. Lastly, only 15% had never applied this strategy. This indicates that they do not plan for their learning and they use random and haphazard way of answering and this what can negatively affect their results and achievement in the assigned test or exam.

Q21: While answering I take into consideration my set goals or purposes to be achieved.

a) Always

b) Sometimes

c) Never

Table3.22. ***Students' Considerations of their Pre-planned Goals in Written Tests***

	Number	**Percentage**
Always	24	40%
Sometimes	26	43.33%
Never	10	16.66%
Total	60	100%

As shown in the above table, 43, 33% of the learners admitted that they sometimes set objectives behind the overall organization of the composition and they take them into account and try to achieve them during the process of writing and answering the exam questions. Also, 40% from the sample reported that they always employ such strategies. So again, the planning strategies are taking important place in written test except for 16.66% of the students who had never attempted to make use of them.

Q22: Do you ask yourself if you are doing your best work when managing or dealing with the task in hand?

a) Always

b) Sometimes

c) Never

Table3.23. ***Students' Self-evaluation of their Test Performance***

	Number	**Percentage**
Always	20	33.33%
Sometimes	30	50%
Never	10	16.66%
Total	60	100%

It is indicated that only 16, 66% of the target language students who declared that they never questioned themselves whether they are doing their best when performing tasks in tests or exams or not. 50% said that they sometimes, in addition to 33, 33% of them who admitted that they always do so. This means that the majority of language learners employ the self-evaluation meta-cognitive writing strategy to self-direct their own work.

Q23: Do you re-read and criticize what you have written down?

a) Always

b) Sometimes

c) Never

Table3.24. Students' Re-readings and Criticism of their writing in Written Test

	Number	**Percentage**
Always	22	36.66%
Sometimes	29	48.33%
Never	9	15%
Total	60	100%

Concerning table 3.24, 15% of the students have maintained that they never re-read and criticize their writings when performing test tasks and exams. Moreover, nearly half of them (48, 33%) have concurred that they sometimes do that, and 36.66% of the sample have reported that they always re-read and criticize their compositions. Once more, this denotes that the majority of the learners make use of the evaluation strategies as they self-reflect on their process of writing, and consequently assess their progress.

Q24: I correct my mistakes immediately whenever they occur in my written work.

a) Always

b) Sometimes

c) Never

Table3.25. ***Students' Correction of their Written Mistakes in Test and Exams***

	Number	**Percentage**
Always	22	36.66%
Sometimes	29	48.33%
Never	9	15%
Total	60	100%

The results show that the majority of the EFL learners (68, 33%) always correct their committed mistakes as they occur in their exam writings, and 28, 33% of the learners use it sometimes. This indicates that they apply monitoring meta-cognitive strategy while writing through in re-considering their compositions, checking their writing, and identifying mistakes either grammatical, punctuation, or lexical and correcting them immediately. But, the rest 3,33% of the students surprisingly said that they never check and correct may be because of

carelessness or the lack of the use of monitoring strategy.

Q25: After producing the final written product, I carefully recheck my answers.

a) Always

b) Sometimes

c) Never

Table3.26. ***Students' re-checking of their Final Written Product in Tests***

	Number	**Percentage**
Always	31	51.66%
Sometimes	26	43.33%
Never	3	5%
Total	60	100%

The results in table above show that 51, 66% of the students always re-check and verify their final written product. Also, 43, 33% of them sometimes do so, and only 5% said they never verify their writing at the final stage. These results reveal that the vast majority of language learners make use of the evaluation strategies to make further improvements at the structural level of the composition for making good academic achievements and producing high quality piece of work. That type of evaluation meta-cognitive strategy is tightly associated with written exams since students reported that they used such strategy while writing -as indicated in the previous question- and at the end of the writing process as it is illustrated by the results of the present question item.

Q26: Do you want to add further comments or suggestions?

The last question is designed for collecting more information concerning the role of cognitive and meta-cognitive strategies in students' performance in written tests. Thereby, only 25% of the sample have answered it and added some comments. They have stated that the topic is a valuable one as these strategies enable the EFL learners to better understand the foreign language. Hence, the cognitive and meta-cognitive strategies help in facilitating and making the learning process more effective.

In addition, four students pointed out that the learners' awareness towards such strategies can be greatly increased through the direct interference of the language teacher. Another two students claimed that these strategies are acquired by the language learner; on the one hand, and emphasized by the language teacher; on the other hand. Moreover, two students claimed that the cognitive and meta-cognitive strategies are often applied unconsciously by the target language learners and whenever their awareness is raised, more chances for the students to organize and improve their learning process are offered. Therefore, language learners have to be aware of the use of such strategies in order to reach a high level of proficiency in writing and to make an effective learning process.

3.1.5 Discussion of the Results

From the statistical analysis of the section about general information, it can be said that most of language learners possess a considerable level in the English language. This result is very encouraging since it demonstrates that the target language students are aware of the significance of studying a foreign language 'English'.

Concerning the students' attitudes towards the importance of attaining a good level in writing; in fact, the vast majority of language learners do not deny the efficacy of the writing

skill in learning the foreign language. Furthermore, 80% of the students reported that the writing skill is difficult to learn. This latter indicates that they are aware that writing is a rigorous act that requires big efforts and a conscious work. The second section also shows that merely all the students regard cohesion and coherence as the most significant aspects that enable them to achieve a good/effective composition. In the writing process section, the analysis of students' responses reveals that almost all of them are not aware about the effectiveness of passing through all the writing stages.

In the last section, most of learners said that their language teachers make assessments in writing but only in exams and tests, or in the module of written expression. Concerning the learners' application of cognitive strategies, which represents the first part of the third section of the questionnaire, it is has been deduced throughout the questionnaire analysis that the majority of language learners apply most of the strategies to varying degrees; such as, retrieval (56, 66%), resourcing (50%), deferral (48, 33%), clarification (56, 66%), verification (50%); except, avoidance which is used by some learners representing 15% (table 3.17). In regard, to the students' use of meta-cognitive strategies, it is noticed that the target language learners sometimes apply them; monitoring (68, 33%), evaluation (48, 33%), planning (43, 33%). Hence, it can be said that more than the half of the sample try sometimes to control and evaluate their learning process. However, more than the half of the sample always applies them. As a conclusion, master one students use various cognitive and meta-cognitive strategies unconsciously from time to time because they are not aware about most of them. Thus, the application of cognitive and meta-cognitive strategies differentiates good/skilled students from poor ones. As, some students of master one students are not aware of the extensive importance of such strategies this leads them to be classified as less proficient writers who cannot achieve satisfying results in written tests or exams.

3.2 The Teachers' Questionnaire

3.2.1 Choice of the Sample

The questionnaire was distributed to thirty-six teachers in the department of English language at Guelma University. In fact all the teachers were very collaborative as they have given back the questionnaires in one week.

3.2.2 Description of the Teachers' Questionnaire

The teachers' questionnaire is composed of ten close ended and open ended questions included within three main sections; general information, writing in tests and exams, and the awareness of the use of cognitive and meta-cognitive strategies in written Tests.

The first section consists of two questions (Q1-Q2) designed to gather information about the number of years of their teaching experience and the degree that they hold. Whereas, the second section is about the teachers' various attitudes about the writing skill, and their assessment and feedback of the students' writings or compositions in tests and exams. It is composed of two questions, from Question three to Question four (Q3-Q4). In Question (Q3), the teachers are asked if they regard writing as an important skill for EFL learners, and they are given the opportunity to justify their answers if they have answered "Yes". While, in Question (Q4), they are questioned about how often do they make assessments in writing. Finally, the third section outlines six questions from question five to question ten (Q5 till Q10). In question five (Q5), the teachers are asked if their students apply some strategies when passing written tests. The next question (Q6) teachers are required to answer whether they use some methods that help in raising their students' awareness towards strategy use or not, and they have to provide a justification if they have opted for "Yes". Question seven (Q7) is about eliciting the teachers' attitudes about the importance of using the cognitive and meta-

cognitive processes when taking a written tests. While, question eight and Question nine (Q8 & Q9) respectively require the teachers to select the set of cognitive and meta-cognitive strategies which they think that their students use while taking written tests. Lastly, in Question ten (Q10) the teachers are asked to provide some suggestions that would encourage the students to use cognitive and meta-cognitive processes while taking tests.

3.2.3 Analysis of the Teachers' Questionnaire

Section One: General Information

Q1. How many years have you been teaching at the University?

……year (s).

The obtained results demonstrate that most of teachers (63, 87%) have been teaching for five to ten years, whereas, 22, 19% of them have taught for more than ten years, 13, 88% of teachers have been teaching for one to five years. This implies that the majority of language teachers have acquired a good experience in teaching which make their answers, comments, and suggestions more valuable, reliable and appropriate to be relied on in achieving the aim of this questionnaire.

Q2. What is your highest degree?

a) Master

b) Magister

c) PhD

Table 3.27. ***The Degree that Teachers Hold***

	Number	**Percentage**
Master	1	2, 77 %
Magister	33	91, 66 %
PhD	2	5, 55 %
Total	36	100%

As shown in table 3.26, the vast majority of language teachers (91, 66%) have the magister degree. While, 5, 55% of the teachers have PhD, and only 2, 77% of them have the master degree. These findings reveal that all the teachers are post-graduate and are highly qualified in regard to the educational level that they have reached.

Section Two: Writing in Tests and Exams

Q3. Do you think that writing is an important skill for EFL learners?

a) Yes

b) No

c) If yes, please explain why:

……..

Table 3.28. ***Teachers' Views about the Importance of the Writing skill***

	Number	**Percentage**
Yes	36	100%
No	0	0%
Total	36	100%

From table 3.27, it can be noticed that all the questioned teachers (100%) have opted for "Yes", and they think that writing is an important skill for EFL learners. They have justified their option by mentioning that it represents the core element of any foreign language learning, a way through which the students can develop their competence to communicate thoughts and ideas efficiently and fluently in formal contexts, it contributes in the development of other skills (reading, listening) and the learners critical thinking, and it provides learners with the opportunity to practice all the other language sub-skills as grammar, vocabulary, punctuation, spelling…ect. In addition, almost all the time the students' linguistic competence and their mastery of the language system are assessed and evaluated based on their writings. This indicates that all the teachers are aware of the importance of the writing skill in learning the foreign language 'English'.

Q4. How often do you assess your students through the use of written tests or exams?

a) Every time you meet the students

b) Weekly

c) Monthly

d) Once in a term

Table 3.29. ***Frequency of Assessment of Students' Work***

	Number	**Percentage**
Every time you meet The students	3	8, 33%
Weekly	6	16, 33%
Monthly	13	36, 11%
Once in a term	14	38, 33%
Total	36	100%

As demonstrated in the above table, teachers' responses imply that 38, 33% of them assess their students using written tests or exams once in a term, 36, 11% of the teachers assess their students' compositions monthly, while, 16, 33% of them reported that they assess their students writings weekly, and only 8, 33% of the teachers assess their students productions each time they meet them. Thus, it can be said that most of the respondents need to be more aware about the benefits and the positive influence of written tests in the students' FL learning, however, some of them representing 24, 66% of the participants are aware of that this can foster the students' ability to write efficiently and to get rid of the encountered writing obstacles that can only be realized by pushing them to do a lot of practice through regular testing of their compositions.

Section Three: The Awareness of the Use of Cognitive and Meta-cognitive Strategies in Written Tests

Q5. According to you, do EFL students apply some strategies in written tests?

a) Yes: All of them

b) Yes: Most of them

c) Yes: Part of them

d) No: None of them

Table 3.30. ***Teachers' Responses on Students' Awareness of Strategy Use***

	Number	**Percentage**
A	1	2, 77%
B	2	3, 33%
C	10	27, 77%
D	23	63, 88%
Total	36	100%

The findings of this table manifested that most of the teachers (63, 88%) claimed that their students do not apply some strategies when performing written tests, 27, 77% of the teachers asserted that only part of them apply such strategies. Whereas, 3, 33% of the teachers reported that most of the students apply some strategies when passing written tests, 2, 77% of them argued that their students do so. Thus, it is obvious that the majority of teachers are unaware that their students use some strategies when performing such kind of tests.

Q6. Do you use some methods that help in raising your students' awareness towards strategy use?

a) Yes

b) No

d) If yes, please explain more

…….....

Table 3.31. ***Teachers' Application of Teaching Methods for Raising Awareness of Strategy Use***

	Number	**Percentage**
Yes	13	36, 11%
No	23	63, 33%
Total	36	100%

From table 3.31, the majority of language teachers (63, 33%) do not use any method that would raise their students' awareness towards strategy use. However, some of them representing 36, 11% use some methods that help in fostering their students' awareness towards strategy use. They argued that they do that through informing them that time management is the only way that would help them to complete any written test, raising their awareness about their preferable individual learning style, driving their attention that they should set goals and think about the message that they want to communicate, giving them a writing task and then discussing with them about the writing difficulties that they have encountered during the writing process, and helping them in what strategy to be chosen for solving such problems, and through reminding them that they should first read the task instructions for better understanding of its requirements and what they are asked to do, define the key terms, start recalling ideas about the topic in hand, move from the general to the specific, and to use a draft for organizing their output. This implies that only very few teachers respectively, do not make efforts to raise their students' proficiency in performance in written tests but the majority do not do.

Q7. To which extent do you think the use of cognitive and meta-cognitive processes is important in taking written tests?

a) Important

b) Somehow important

c) Not important

Table 3.32. ***Teachers' Views about the Importance of Applying the Cognitive and Meta-cognitive Strategies in Test Performance***

	Number	**Percentage**
Important	31	86, 11%
Somehow important	5	13, 88%
Not important	0	0%
Total	36	100%

The table above shows that the majority of language teachers (86, 11%) pointed out that employing the cognitive and meta-cognitive strategies when performing written tests is so important as it helps the learners to achieve better results and come up with high quality writing. While, only 13, 88% of the teachers consider it as less important. This indicates that almost all the teachers appreciate the importance of using such strategies in taking written tests but the majority, as mentioned in the previous question, still do nothing to raise students awareness towards them.

Q8. Which of the following cognitive strategies do you think the students use while taking written tests?

a) Clarification

b) Retrieval

c) Resourcing

d) Deferral

e) Avoidance

f) Verification

g) All of them

Table 3.33. ***The Teachers' Attitudes towards the Students' Use of the Cognitive Strategies***

	Number	**Percentage**
Clarification	12	33, 33 %
Retrieval	14	38, 33 %
Resourcing	9	25 %
Deferral	0	0 %
Avoidance	11	30, 55%
Verification	13	36, 11%
All of them	7	19, 44%

Concerning the tenth question of what strategies do students use while taking written tests, the majority of teachers 33, 33% stated that their students use the clarification strategy,

38, 33% of them argued that they make use of the retrieval strategy, and 25% of the language teachers reported that their learners apply the resourcing strategy, but no teacher think that his students make use of the deferral strategy. Moreover, 30, 55% of the language teachers asserted that their learners apply the avoidance strategy, whereas, 36, 11% of them stated that their learners utilize the verification strategy, and 19, 44% of them answered that their students employ all of the cognitive strategies while taking written tests.

Q9. Which of the following meta-cognitive strategies do you think the students use while taking written tests?

a) Planning

b) Evaluation

c) Monitoring

d) All of them

Table 3.34. ***The Teachers' Attitudes towards the Students' Use of the Meta-cognitive Strategies***

	Number	**Percentage**
Planning	17	47, 22%
Evaluation	3	8, 33%
Monitoring	9	25%
All of them	14	38, 88%

The results of this question demonstrate that 47, 22% of the teachers argued that their students' make use of the planning strategy, which is one of the writing meta-cognitive

strategies, when taking a written test, while, 8, 33% of them do not think that their learners make use of the evaluation strategy when performing such kind of tests, and 25% of the teachers claimed that their learners do apply the monitoring strategy, whereas, 38, 88% of them asserted that they apply the meta-cognitive strategies while performing a written test. So, these findings reveal again that the vast majority of language teachers are unaware that their learners do apply various types of meta-cognitive strategies for accomplishing the writing tasks in written tests or exams.

Q10. Could you give some suggestions that would encourage the students to use cognitive and meta-cognitive processes while taking tests?

Despite the fact that only 38, 88% of the language teachers provided some suggestions, but it is something motivating to find that there are some teachers who are really passionate to share some advise that might be helpful for the students to get rid of their encountered obstacles during the written tests performance. Teachers believe that the language learners should be aware that they are unconsciously applying the cognitive and meta-cognitive strategies in order to be able to apply them constantly; they added that the majority of their students do not follow an organized way of writing because of their unawareness of such strategies and ignorance as well.

In addition, they argued that the students should not focus on the final product and they have to avoid the spoon feeding system that they accustomed to follow to get good marks, rather they should learn how to take written tests through differentiating between test items, accordingly, they have to set goals and objectives in order to organize their ideas, also they have to be aware of the mistakes they commit while answering the task questions by re-reading what they have written, and reflecting on what can be changed before giving the final draft. Besides, the other option is that the learners need to work on the strategies they prefer to

use i.e. to develop and benefit from their preferences by exploiting them to the max. Finally, they assumed that the learners should be provided with guided instructions about the different stages of writing and how they can apply these strategies, and to devote some modules that tackle the issue of cognitive and meta-cognitive writing strategies as, psycholinguistics and TEFL for raising the students' awareness about them and to improve their language composition quality.

3.2.4 Discussion of the Results

The data and the obtained results show that merely all the teachers have an adequate teaching experience and possess a good level since they are all postgraduate, this demonstrates that all the teachers have the ability and the required capacities to improve their students' proficiency level in writing and to make positive changes which make the learning process more effective and successful.

In regard to the teachers' attitudes about the importance of the writing skill for EFL learners, it is noticed that all the teachers acknowledge its significant role in the EFL classes. However, it is really disappointing to find that most of the teachers, representing more than a half, rarely apply written tests to assess their students' writings which indicates that they do not give the opportunity to their students to practice and enhance the quality of their productions, and this explains the raison behind the learners' encountered difficulties and their poor style in writing. Although, the majority of the teachers confirmed that their students are unaware about strategy use, but most of them do not neither recommend nor use any method that would help in raising the students' awareness towards the usefulness of applying certain strategies when composing. In addition, they do not deny the importance of using the cognitive and meta-cognitive strategies effectively in taking written tests. Hence, their replies as to the enforcement and application of the previously mentioned strategies in their classes

differ. Concerning the use of cognitive writing strategies, most of the teachers think that their students do not apply them while taking a written test, and they claimed that they use only few of them to some extent (retrieval, verification, clarification, avoidance, and resourcing); this indicates that they are not aware that their students, unconsciously, apply different types of strategies when performing a written test. Besides, concerning the meta- cognitive strategy use, only few teachers asserted that their students apply some of them. Hence, again almost all the teachers are unaware that their students do apply different types of meta-cognitive strategies while passing such kind of test.

Lastly, to make EFL students skilled writers necessitates co-operation between both students and teachers. Thus, the teachers have to learn about and understand the various types of cognitive and meta-cognitive writing strategies and then prepare for a course instruction in which he/she explains all them and how they can be applied. Besides, the students as well are required to follow their teachers' instructions and apply the above mentioned strategies effectively during the act of writing.

Conclusion

The last chapter has reported an investigation that was conducted for the sake of finding out about the application of cognitive and meta-cognitive processes in the students' performance in written tests. As it is indicated throughout this chapter, two questionnaires were adopted to have both students and teachers different views regarding this issue. The questionnaires' outcomes proved that the language learners do use different types of cognitive and meta-cognitive strategies in written tests and exams, but, they still lack a kind of awareness concerning that matter. In addition, it has been noticed that the majority of language teachers are unaware that their students make use of various types of cognitive and meta-cognitive strategies. Thus, the next section will be devoted to some guidelines and

recommendations for both students and teachers to raise their awareness concerning the significance of those strategies.

General Conclusion

1. Concluding Remarks

This research work is induced by the intention to explore the importance of applying the cognitive and meta-cognitive processes on students' performance in written tests. Throughout our field work, the researcher sought to answer a number of questions: What are the cognitive and meta-cognitive strategies that are activated when accomplishing a written test performance? Are students and teachers aware about the usage of cognitive and meta-cognitive strategies in written test performance?

Basic information were obtained through using two questionnaires which has been oriented to both master one students of English at Guelma University and the other was handed to teachers for gathering further information. Thus, this research is certainly the most valuable that would help master students in get rid of most of their writing problems. The questionnaires' findings reflected that both the teachers and the majority of the students are not aware about the usage of cognitive and meta-cognitive strategies and its efficacy in enhancing their performance in written tests. Hence, these findings have proved the researcher's hypothesis that the students and teachers are unaware about the usage of cognitive and meta-cognitive processes by test-takers. This last helps the researcher to diagnose the students' writing weaknesses and to provide a number of solutions that would help in pushing the learners to employ these effective tools (cognitive and meta-cognitive strategies) for overcoming such difficulties.

Therefore, full responsibility should not be put on the teachers because they are the ones responsible for making the students aware of cognitive and meta-cognitive strategy use, but rather the students have to try to discover and learn about each strategy and its usefulness.

2. Pedagogical Implications

From the obtained findings of this study, it is observed that the students are suffering from serious problems when performing writing tasks. Consequently, as a solution to these obstacles, the cognitive and meta-cognitive strategies should be taught in certain modules as; psycholinguistics, written expression, and TEFL. After that, a number of pedagogical implications are suggested for both teachers and learners.

2.1 Implications for Teachers

Language teachers should adapt some teaching methods to raise the students' awareness towards the strategy use, train the students on how and when to use these strategies according to the task requirements, and motivate them to employ the cognitive and meta-cognitive strategies constantly. Good learning outcomes can be the result of efficient teaching, so a number of instructions are advocated for language teachers to follow:

- Before applying and teaching the cognitive and meta-cognitive strategies to the learners, the language teachers should have mastered them.
- The teachers' role in the class should change from a controller to a facilitator who assists his students during the learning process.
- The teachers have to motivate the students to write and to make them perform as much practices as possible.
- While writing, the teachers should identify the strategies that their students use.
- The teachers can use a think aloud protocol to make students discover the cognitive and meta-cognitive strategies that they use during the completion of the writing task since these strategies are not observed. After that, the teacher should review their

compositions to identify the types of writing problems in terms of these strategies. On the basis of the obtained results the teacher can prepare his course instructions.

- The teachers should teach the students about the different cognitive strategies (clarification, retrieval, deferral, verification, avoidance...), and the meta-cognitive strategies (planning, monitoring, and evaluation), and the usefulness of each strategy.
- The teachers should monitor the learners' tasks and results, and provide instant feedback.
- The teachers have to make sure that each students' writing proficiency is developing.

Implications for Learners

- The students should be engaged in the writing process, work in pairs where they can exchange their compositions to assess them and provide comments about each other's writing strengths and weaknesses, in this way their critical thinking would develop.
- They should discuss anything ambiguous or any problem with their teacher for further clarification or seeking for solutions to this problem.
- The students have to read more books and novels to ameliorate their writing style since this can help them in recording some prefabricated phrases, and useful sentences to employ them in their writings.

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my caring parents

To my beloved father that his dream for me was to reach that level, May Allah bless his soul.

I am utterly grateful to my Mother who has always given me strength and hope.

My deep appreciation goes to my sister, brothers, and to my friends for offering me the suitable conditions to work at ease. Without their encouragement and support, this work would not be a reality.

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Abstract

The present study seeks to explore the students' use of cognitive and meta-cognitive strategies in written test performance. To reach such an aim, the researcher has devised two questionnaires for both teachers and students to collect data for this study. The first questionnaire was administered to sixty master one students at the department of English Language who were chosen randomly. It aims to identify the cognitive and meta-cognitive strategies that master one students use in written tests. The second one was administered to thirty-six language teachers at Guelma University to find out whether they are aware, and if they try to raise their students' awareness of the previously mentioned strategies. The obtained results have proved that students do apply various types of cognitive and meta-cognitive strategies. Also, the majority of teachers are unaware about the usage of cognitive and meta-cognitive processes by test-takers and its efficacy in high quality writing production. Therefore, the researcher ended up by recommending some suggestions and pedagogical directions for both students and teachers in order to increase the importance of the aforementioned strategies for better writing outcomes in tests and exams.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

EFL: English as a Foreign Language

ESL: English as a Second Language

FL: Foreign Language

LLS: Language Learning Strategies

PhD: Doctor of Philosophy

Q: Question

SILL: Strategy Inventory of Language Learning

SL: Second Language

TD: Test Data

TEFL: Teaching English as a Foreign Language

TOEFL: Test of English as a Foreign Language

USA: United States of America

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Appendix A

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Summaries

APPENDICES

Appendix A

Students' Questionnaire

Dear students,

This questionnaire is formulated to achieve the objective of investigating the use of cognitive & meta-cognitive strategies in written test performance. Thus, this questionnaire is intended to identify these strategies as well as your attitudes and views about their effectiveness in improving your achievement or performance in written tests, and overcoming the difficulties encountered when writing. You are kindly requested to answer these questions seriously to reach the validity of the research and its objective. For that reason, the researcher would be grateful if you will give your full interest and answer honestly.

Please, tick the appropriate box (es) or write full answer (s) in the space provided.

Thank you for your time and co-operation

Sameh BOUSSAHA

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University of 8 Mai 1945, Guelma

2017-2018

Section One: General Information

1. How long have you been learning the English language?

……

2. Where would you classify your level in English?

a) Very Good ☐ c) Average ☐ e) Very Bad ☐

b) Good ☐ d) Bad ☐

Section Two: The Writing Skill

3. Do you think that attaining a good level in writing is important and valuable?

a) Yes ☐ b) No ☐

4. How do you find the writing skill?

a) Very difficult	
b) A bit difficult	
c) Easy	

d) If it is difficult, please, explain why

……..

5. What is the writing aspect/ element that make your writing good and effective?

a) Style	
b) Organization	
c) Punctuation	
d) Vocabulary	
e) Spelling	
f) Cohesion and Coherence	

g) Other, please specify

……...

6. In your writing do you proceed through all the writing stages?

a) Yes ☐ b) No ☐

c) If yes explain why?

……

……

d) If no, which of the following stages you do not pass through?

a) Prewriting ☐ c) Revising ☐

b) Drafting ☐ d) Editing ☐

Section Three: The Use of Cognitive & Meta-cognitive Strategies in Written Tests

7. Does your language teacher make assessments (tests) in writing?

a) Yes	
b) No	

8. How often does your teacher make writing tests/ assessments?

……..…..

A. Cognitive Strategies Inventory:

While taking a written test or an exam:	**Always**	**Sometimes**	**Never**
9. Do you re-read the assigned question or what has been written down several times to better understand it?			
10. Do you take notes while retrieving or remembering information?			
11. Do you write continuously without stopping, until an idea comes?			
12. Do you try to summarize what has just been written?			
13. Before you answer, do you translate the question items and tasks into your first language?			
14. Do you use your background knowledge to infer the meaning of difficult words?			
15. Do you revise or verify what you have written down?			
16. When facing a problem in a given question, do you ask the teacher of the assigned test for clarification?			
17. Do you classify terms according to their shared features in order to eliminate irrelevant elements?			

B. Meta-cognitive Strategies Inventory:

While taking a written test or an exam:	**Always**	**Sometimes**	**Never**
18. After I preview the test or exam, I planned on how to approach and complete it			
19. I started by answering the easy questions and leave the difficult ones later			
20. I looked for the marks given for each question before starting to answer the test or exam			
21. While answering I take into consideration my set goals or purposes to be achieved			
22. Do you ask yourself if you are doing your best work when managing or dealing with the task in hand?			
23. Do you re-read and criticize what you have written down?			
24. I correct my mistakes immediately whenever they occur in my written work			
25. After producing the final written product, I carefully recheck my answers			

26. Do you want to add further comments or suggestions?

……

……

……

Thank You

Appendix B

Teachers' Questionnaire

This questionnaire is designed for the completion of a study that intends at exploring the students' use of cognitive and meta-cognitive strategies in writing tests. Thus, you are kindly asked to fill in this questionnaire to express your attitudes about the importance of using the previously mentioned processes.

Please tick the right box for each item, or provide full answer whenever it is needed.

Boussaha Sameh

Department of English

University of 8 Mai 1945, Guelma

2017-2018

Section One: General Information

1. How many years have you been teaching at the university?

…… year (s).

2. What is your highest degree?

Master ☐

Magister ☐

PhD ☐

Section Two: Writing in Tests and Exams

3. Do you think that writing is an important skill for EFL learners?

a. Yes ☐

b. No ☐

c. If yes, please explain why:

……

……

4. How often do you assess your students through the use of written tests or exams?

a. Every time you meet the students ☐

b. Weekly ☐

c. Monthly ☐

e. Once in a term ☐

Section Three: The Awareness of the Use of Cognitive and Meta-cognitive Strategies in Written Tests

5. According to you, do EFL students apply some strategies in written tests?

a. Yes: All of them ☐

b. Yes: Most of them ☐

c. Yes: Part of them ☐

d. No: None of them ☐

6. Do you use some methods that help in raising your students' awareness towards strategy use?

a. Yes ☐

b. No ☐

c. If yes, please explain more

……

……

……

……

7. To which extent do you think the use of cognitive and meta-cognitive processes is essential in taking written tests?

b. Important ☐

c. Somehow Important ☐

d. Optional ☐

8. Which of the following cognitive strategies do you think the students use while taking written tests?

a. Clarification	
b. Retrieval	
c. Resourcing	
d. Deferral	
e. Avoidance	
f. Verification	
g. All of them	

9. Which of the following meta-cognitive strategies do you think the students use while taking written tests?

a. Planning	
b. Evaluation	
c. Monitoring	
d. All of them	

10. Could you give some suggestions that would encourage the students to use cognitive and meta-cognitive processes while taking tests?

……

……

……

……

Thanks you a lot for your collaboration

Résumé

Notre présente étude vise à explorer l'utilisation des stratégies cognitives et metacognitive par les apprenants lors des productions écrite. Pour atteindre cet objectif nous avons diffusé deux questionnaires au niveau de l'université de Guelma, le premier a été destiné à soixante étudiants de master 1 anglais afin d'identifier leurs connaissances cognitive et metacognitive utilisé par le biais des tests écrits. Par contre le second a été destiné à trente-six enseignants d'Anglais au niveau de la même université pour savoir l'état et le degré de la sensibilisation des apprenants pour l'utilisation des connaissances précitées. Les résultats obtenus montre que les étudiants d'Anglais appliquent des différents stratégies cognitive et metacognitive, cependant, la majorité des enseignants ne sont pas censé par cette utilisations pendent une rédaction cohérente et cohésive. Nous avons conclus notre recherche par des pistes didactique et des orientations pédagogiques pour que l'apprenant et l'enseignant y puissent suivre. Cela permet de leur sensibiliser de l'importance des stratégies précitées pour une bonne amélioration au niveau de l'écrit.

ملخص

تهدف الدراسة الحالية إلى اكتشاف استخدام الطلاب للاستراتيجيات المعرفية و الإدراكية أثناء أدائهم للاختبارات الكتابية. و للوصول إلى هذا الهدف، ابتكر الباحث استبيانين لكل من الطلاب و الأساتذة الذين تم جمع البيانات من خلالهما. تم توزيع الاستبيان الأول بشكل عشوائي على ستين طالبا و طالبة من السنة الأولى ماستر، قسم اللغة الانجليزية بجامعة قالمة. هذا الأخير يهدف إلى تحديد الاستراتيجيات المعرفية و الإدراكية المستخدمة من طرف طلاب السنة الأولى ماستر أثناء أدائهم للاختبارات الكتابية. أما الاستبيان الثاني فقد وجه إلى ستة و ثلاثين أستاذا بقسم اللغة الانجليزية بجامعة قالمة لمعرفة مدى وعي الأساتذة و إذا حاولوا رفع مستوى وعي طلابهم بالاستراتيجيات المذكورة سابقا. حيث أثبتت النتائج المتحصل عليها أن طلبة اللغة الانجليزية يطبقون أنواعا مختلفة من الاستراتيجيات المعرفية و الإدراكية. أما أغلبية الأساتذة فإنهم غير مدركين لاستخدام هذه الاستراتيجيات من قبل المتقدمين للاختبار و فعاليتهم في إنتاج الكتابة العالية الجودة. لذلك انتهى الباحث إلى التوصية ببعض المقترحات و التوجيهات التربوية ليتبعها كل من الطلاب و الأساتذة من اجل زيادة وعيهم بأهمية الاستراتيجيات المذكورة أعلاه لتحقيق نتائج كتابة أفضل في الاختبارات و الامتحانات.